THE IMMORTAL THOR

EWING
BAZALDUA
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MARVEL

THE SON OF THOR

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A MYTH-MAKING WRITER AL EWING CONTINUES HIS UNPREDICTABLE SAGA!

IN ASGARD, THOR WEIGHED HIS OBLIGATIONS AS ALL-FATHER AND AS GAEA'S CHILD — and what he owed to both sides of his nature. Meanwhile, on Earth, a risen evil sought new gods to challenge the old — and found them in Thor's earliest foes. That puts the God of Thunder on a collision course with the Radioactive Man, the Grey Gargoyle, the Cobra and Mister Hyde! All have plenty reason to hate him — and working together, they have the power to end an All-Father's reign! Plus: What shocking game is the Enchantress playing? And a cavalcade of artists joins the fun to tell Tales of Asgard!

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COLLECTING *IMMORTAL THOR #16-20* — BY AL EWING, JAN BAZALDUA, MATT HOLLINGSWORTH AND MORE.

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"FIRE I SEE BURNING, AND THE EARTH BLAZING; MANY WILL HAVE THEIR LIVES TO SAVE."

– FROM "THE LAY OF HYNDLA,"
THE ELDER EDDAS OF SAEMUND SIGFUSSON

Would you know more? Then sit with me around the secret fire, to hear the magic words.
Once upon a time...there were ten great realms, in a vast tree that was everything.
And the realm of iron was called Midgard.
A land of mortals and mayflies, where meaning was hard found, easy ignored--and more precious than a diamond.
But a land that had known Gods--some ancient as the rock itself, some born to newer ages. Newer cycles.
The wheel turned. Old patterns saw their time again. Again and again.
The first of the Gods was a man of fire.

DR CHEN LU
THAT'S ME.
I'M DR. CHEN LU.
I TAKE IT YOU'RE MY DRIVER?
YOU... Y-YOU'RE...
DR CHEN LU
YES. I AM THAT DR. CHEN LU.
"THE RADIOACTIVE MAN."
A man of fire.

WOULD YOU *MIND?* I BROUGHT A FEW ***PERSONAL EFFECTS*** IN CASE OF A LONG STAY.
...
A-ARE YOU...I MEAN, IS IT ***SAFE*** TO...?
ALL DIPLOMATIC NICETIES HAVE BEEN ATTENDED TO, I ASSURE YOU.
RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES NOTWITHSTANDING, AS AN ***EX-THUNDERBOLT***--ONE OF EARTH'S ***SAVIORS*** DURING THE SKRULL INVASION-- I AM PERMITTED A CERTAIN ***LEEWAY.***
NOT TO MENTION THAT YOUR EMPLOYER UNDERSTANDS WHAT ***LEVERAGE*** TO USE, AND ***WHERE...***
...AH. YOU MEANT THE ***GLOW.***
DO NOT FEAR. IT MEANS I AM ***MODULATING*** MY EMISSIONS INTO HARMLESS ***LIGHT...***
OKAY.
WHAT, *UH*...WHAT IF YOU ***STOP*** GLOWING?
THEN YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD.
SO EITHER WAY, IT'S USELESS WORRYING.
NOW--I HAVE A QUESTION OF MY ***OWN.*** YOUR EMPLOYER SAID THERE WOULD BE ***FOUR*** OF US.
WHO ARE THE OTHER ***THREE...?***
*In Midgard, a **new** pantheon was forming...*

...but in the golden realm of Asgard, Thor only had thoughts for the old.
THE RAINBOW BRIDGE.
OUR LINK TO THE MORTAL REALM. OUR SHINING PROMISE TO HUMANITY.
I STILL RECALL THE MOMENT I BROKE IT, SIF.
IT WAS LOKI WHO MENDED WHAT MY HANDS TORE ASUNDER--AT WHAT PRICE, I STILL KNOW NOT.
AND HOW DID I REPAY MY SIBLING?
BY SENDING THEM AWAY FROM THIS REALM AND FROM MY SIGHT--AS PUNISHMENT FOR MISCHIEF.
YET WHEN THE ENCHANTRESS MAKES HER MISCHIEF? ATTACKS ME, ENSORCELLS ME, FRAMES ME FOR MURDER? HOW DO I REPAY HER?
BY CONSIDERING THE JUSTICE OF HER REQUEST.

AND WHAT IS SHE REQUESTING THIS TIME...?
THAT I MAKE RIGHT WHAT I HAVE DONE WRONG.
SHE LOST HER SON, IRIC, BECAUSE OF MY FAILURE AS ASGARD'S KING--BECAUSE I WAS NOT THERE WHEN IRIC NEEDED ME...
AND NEITHER WAS SHE.
NEITHER WAS I, WHEN MY BROTHER DIED. YOU DON'T THINK I'D HAVE BEEN AT HEIMDALL'S SIDE IF I COULD HAVE? BUT WE CANNOT BE EVERYWHERE AT ONCE, THOR.
WE'RE NONE OF US THAT KIND OF GOD.
YOU SPEAK OF THE DUTY OF KIN, SIF. WHAT, THEN, OF THE ALL-FATHER'S DUTY? DO I NOT BEAR A PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ALL ASGARD?
ODIN KNEW IT. FOR ALL HIS STUBBORN RAGES AND SLY GAMES, HIS FIRST THOUGHT WAS EVER OF THE REALM ETERNAL.
AND MORE THAN ONCE, NOBLE FREYJA SACRIFICED ALL FOR ASGARD'S GOOD.
HOW, THEN, DO I MEASURE?
ONLY I CAN JUDGE THAT--AND I MUST JUDGE IT STERNLY...
AYE. I SUPPOSE YOU MUST.
EVERY KING SHOULD HAVE HIS LUXURIES.

LUXURIES...?
WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU CALL WALLOWING IN A TRAGEDY YOU COULD NOT FORESEE AND CANNOT REPAIR?
RESOLVE TO DO BETTER IN THE FUTURE, IF YOU WISH--BUT YOU CANNOT UNDO WHAT IS NOW DONE.
CAN I NOT?
YOUNG IRIC DIED IN BATTLE--HE RESIDES NOW IN VALHALLA. 'TIS IN MY POWER TO GRANT HIM A REPRIEVE FROM THAT HALL...
FROM THE ETERNAL REWARD? WILL HE THANK YOU, THOR?
AND WILL THE OTHER EINHERJAR NOT THEN PETITION YOU FOR THEIR OWN DAY AMONG THE LIVING? WHAT THEN?
WILL YOU BLOW THE GREAT GJALLARHORN AND SUMMON THE DEAD FOR EVERY GRIEVING MOTHER, OR ONLY FOR ONE?
AND IT IS ONLY A REPRIEVE, THOR. YOU ARE NOT YOUR FATHER--YOU ONLY COMMAND THE DOOR. YOU DID NOT BUILD THE HALL.
YOU CANNOT BRING HIM BACK.
AYE.
THERE ARE FORCES TO WHICH EVEN A GOD MUST BOW.

YOU AND AMORA HAVE **MUCH IN COMMON**. YOU EACH HIDE **MANY THINGS** BENEATH THE SURFACE YOU SHOW THE WORLD.
BUT **SHE** IS AS MUCH A PLAYER OF GAMES AS **LOKI**...
AS EVER, SIF, THERE IS **WISDOM** IN THY WORDS.
AND I WILL THINK ON THEM **FURTHER** AS I MAKE THE JOURNEY TO **MIDGARD**.
YOU DID SEEM DRESSED FOR AN **ADVENTURE**.
IS THAT YOUR NEW **BELT** I SEE ABOUT YOU? **YOLGJÖRD**, YOU CALLED IT--THE BELT OF **ENDURANCE?**
AYE. IT SHOULD **PROOF** ME AGAINST THE **SKALD-SPELL** AMORA CAST THAT SAPS MY **WITS** WHEN I AM AMONG MORTALS.
AND WITH MY **TRUE** WITS ABOUT ME, I MAY BEGIN **CLEARING MY NAME**...
AND IF THE MORTALS WILL NOT **LET** IT BE CLEARED, THOR?
WHAT **THEN?**
Thor had **no words** for the Lady Sif.
For he would only know the **true** answer to her question when put to the **test**...

...and the test was now upon him.
To most, a rainbow upon a clear day would be naught but a charming oddity.
But there were those on Midgard who knew the truth of such an omen--that it heralded the arrival of Thor.
And where those same mortals would once have responded with joy at a visit from their hero...
...now, Thor beheld only fear.
The faces of the crowd bid fair to break his mighty heart... and in them, Thor could read auguries of greater trouble.
For he knew that Midgard's authorities would likewise be watching for the signs of his coming...
...and they, too, would no longer be his friends.
FREEZE!

THOR ODINSON-- YOU'RE UNDER ARREST.
WE NEED HEAVY BACKUP TO THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT, OVER--HULKBUSTERS, EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT--
POLICE
POLICE
I UNDERSTAND. ONLY LOWER THY WEAPON, OFFICER.
THE BULLET WILL NOT PIERCE MY SKIN, AND THERE ARE INNOCENTS WHO MAY BE HARMED...
YOU DROP YOURS!
HAMMER ON THE GROUND! NOW!
IF I PUT IT DOWN, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PICK IT UP AGAIN.
WOULD IT NOT BE EASIER IF I BROUGHT IT TO THE STATION? I WILL ANSWER ALL OF YOUR QUESTIONS THERE--I PROMISE YOU--
OH DEAR, THOR.
WHAT...?
THAT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE RESISTING ARREST.
A chill ran through Thor's blood.
He knew the Radioactive Man of old...
THOOM

...and knew **all** that his power could do.
CHEN LU...? WHAT BUSINESS HAVE YOU ***HERE***, DOCTOR?
THUNDERBOLTS BUSINESS, OF COURSE. AFTER ALL, WE'RE THE ONES WHO DEAL WITH THE ***ROGUE HEROES.***
DO NOT ENTER
CO'S
WAIT--AREN'T THE THUNDERBOLTS ***EMERGENCY RESPONSE*** NOW? ***HAWKEYE*** RUNS 'EM--THE ***OLD*** HAWKEYE--
NAH, THAT GOT SHUT DOWN. THERE WAS A ***NEW*** ONE THAT STARTED UP, I THINK...?
THE TEAM NAME DOES CREATE A DEGREE OF ***CONFUSION***. MOST UNFORTUNATE.
HERE--MY ***CLEARANCE***.
PARK
THUNDERBOLTS
SIR, THIS ***CARD***...IT WENT OUT OF DATE ***YEARS*** AGO.
I'M, *UH*, GONNA HAVE TO ASK YOU TO ***POWER DOWN*** AND LET ***US*** HANDLE THIS...
THAT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT, OFFICERS.
JUST GIVE ME A ***MOMENT***, AND I'LL BE ***MORE*** THAN HAPPY...
...TO STOP GLOWING.
All that his power could do.

NAY...
HEY!
Perhaps it was a bluff. An empty threat.
The Radioactive Man was not without a sense of morality.
But if not...then every mortal in this place would meet a slow and hideous death.
LET HIM GO--
AYE!
I SHALL LET HIM GO--

--AND MJOLNIR, AS WELL!
The God of Thunder could not take the risk no matter how his actions seemed...
...to other eyes.
AS PREDICTED, MR. AGGER. RADIOACTIVE MAN IS MOBILE--HEADED SOUTH.
MY GUESS IS THOR'S TAKING THIS TO BROOKLYN--
GPS TG1
0 11 19 4
130 59
--THERE ARE SOME ABANDONED BUILDINGS THERE THAT MAKE GOOD STAGING AREAS IF YOU CARE ABOUT CIVILIANS.
HRRHH.
HE SHOULD WORRY ABOUT HIMSELF!
READY ON CHEN'S SIGNAL, GENTLEMEN.
WHERE HE GOES...

"...THOR WILL FOLLOW."
When possible, Thor preferred to fly with Mjolnir's aid. But as a sky-God, he was not without his own resources...
STORM-WINDS--BEAR ME HENCE!
GET BACK HERE!
TOO LATE. HE'S GONE.
STILL, I GUESS NOW WE KNOW FOR SURE...
"...THOR'S GONE BAD."
CHEN PLAYED THAT MOST CUNNINGLY. HE KNEW I WOULD CATCH HIS HIDDEN THREAT AGAINST THE MORTALS... INDEED, 'TWAS FOR MY EARS ALONE.
AND AS A RESULT, I AM MADE TO SEEM THE VILLAIN--AND HE THE HERO. NOT AN AUSPICIOUS START, THOR.
BUT 'TIS THE WHY OF IT THAT CONCERNS ME MOST.
DID HE SEE IN MY TROUBLES THE CHANCE TO HUMBLE ME FOR PAST DEFEATS? PART OF ME HOPES SO.
BECAUSE THE ALTERNATIVE...

...IS THAT HE DOES NOT WORK *ALONE.*
MJOLNIR-- *TO ME.*
THAP
THE HAMMER HAS SENT HIM FAR ENOUGH. *GRAVITY* WILL NOW CARRY HIM THE REST OF THE WAY...
...TO THE BATTLEGROUND OF *MY* CHOOSING.
KROOMM
STILL *GLOWING,* DOCTOR?
'TIS WELL FOR *THEE*--FOR IF YOU *HAD* ENDANGERED MY MORTAL FRIENDS, 'TWOULD AROUSE MY *IRE.* BUT AS THINGS STAND, I WILL OFFER YOU A *CHANCE.*
SURRENDER.

YOU LIKE THE GLOW, DO YOU?
HERE, THEN--
--A CLOSER LOOK!
UNNH!
FWASHH
YOU SEEK TO BLIND ME, VILLAIN...?
IT KEEPS MY HEAD ON MY SHOULDERS A MOMENT LONGER.
AND THE RADIATION SIGNATURE DOUBLES AS A MARKER OF SORTS.
MATTER TRANSLOCATION IS MUCH LESS RISKY IF THERE'S SOMETHING TO HOME IN ON.
"Translocation." Thor knew the word from his time as an Avenger.
A form of teleportation. Too perilous for most...but those willing to brave the dangers could reach anywhere.
Midgard now had a rainbow bridge of its own.
BUT WHO...?

HAIL, HAIL! THE GANG'S ALL HERE!
WHAMM
THE COBRA AND *MR. HYDE.* YOU'VE SETTLED YOUR DIFFERENCES, THEN?
I'LL FORGIVE *ANY* MAN WHO COMES OUT OF A *WELL-EARNED RETIREMENT* TO FREE ME FROM THE *MADHOUSE!*
RAVENCROFT! DO I *LOOK* MAD TO YOU, SIR?
HARDLY!
WHAMM
I AM THE VERY MODEL OF CALM!

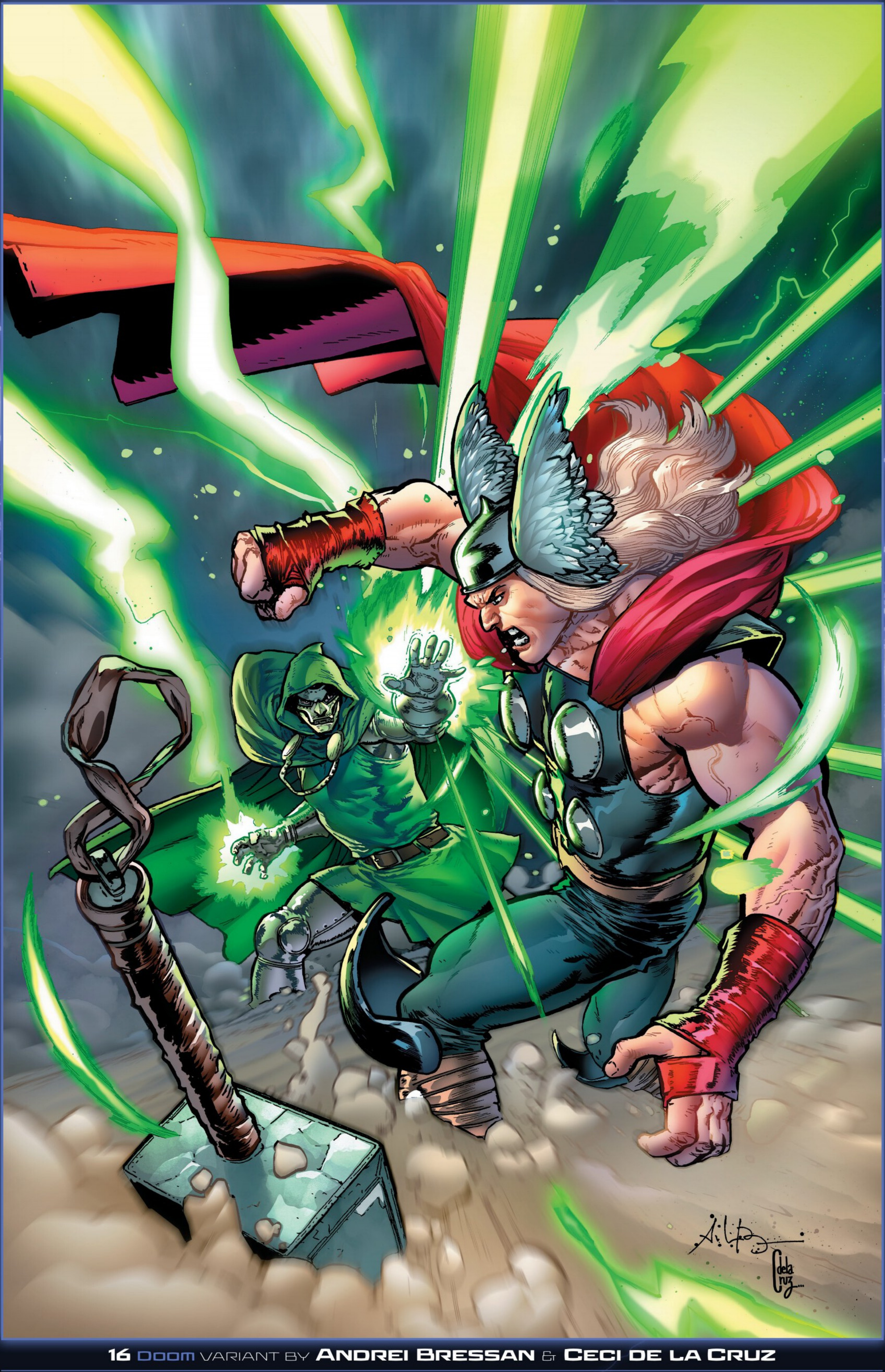
HE IS STRONGER THAN WHEN I MET HIM LAST--AND FASTER. SOME NEW TITRATION OF HIS TRANSFORMATIVE ELIXIR, NO DOUBT.
I CAN MATCH HIM STILL...BUT THAT WAS ALWAYS THE TRAP WITH THESE TWO.
HYDE KEEPS ME BUSY...
...WHILE THE COBRA STRIKES!
VOORHEES! I'M NOT YOUR BLASTED CHARABANC!
JUST GETTING THE PROPER ELEVATION, CALVIN.
REMEMBER THIS, THOR? MY COBRA GASSS...?
FWUMPHH
AYE--A CHOKING POISON THAT STINGS EVEN A GOD'S EYES. BUT IT KEEPS MY FOES BACK, AS WELL.
AND 'TWILL TAKE BUT A SINGLE MOMENT TO SUMMON THE WINDS AND BLOW THESE VAPORS HENCE--
A THING I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT STONE, MON AMI.
IN CHOKING GAS, IT DOES NOT NEED TO BREATHE.
But sometimes, a single moment...

...is a moment too long.
AS YOU ARE NOW LEARNING.

EXCELLENT WORK, *GREY GARGOYLE.*
I SEE YOUR *STONE TOUCH* IS AS POTENT AS EVER...
...
IT'S *NOT.*
LSS
WHAT?
SOMETHING'S *WRONG.*
THAT *BELT* OF HIS...
...IT *ISN'T CHANGING.* IT'S *RESISTING* MY POWER--I CAN *FEEL* IT.
IT'S TAKING *ALL I HAVE* TO *KEEP* HIM LIKE THIS.
HRRH.
AND HOW IS THAT *OUR PROBLEM,* EXACTLY?
ÊTES-VOUS FOU? MY STONE SPELL LASTS AN *HOUR*--THAT IS WHAT WE *PLANNED* FOR!
BUT *NOW?* IF I LET GO MY HAND, HE WILL REVERT BACK FROM STONE IN PERHAPS A *MINUTE*--PERHAPS EVEN *LESS*--
LESS THAN A MINUTE, YOU SAY?
I'LL ASK *AGAIN,* OLD FELLOW...

...HOW IS THAT OUR PROBLEM?
KROOM

FIRE AND STONE



16 Doom VARIANT BY **ANDREI BRESSAN** & **CECI DE LA CRUZ**

"YOUNG FELLOW! YOUNG FELLOW!
BY WHAT FELLOW ART THOU
BEGOT? OF WHAT PEOPLE ARE
THOU THE SON?"

– FROM "THE LAY OF FAFNIR,"
THE ELDER EDDAS OF SAEMUND SIGFUSSON

Thor gazed into Eternity.
And saw nothing. No star to guide him. No bird to show him a sign.
So, as before, he stripped his mind of thoughts...closed his eyes...and breathed deep the slumber of Gods.
THOR.
And then...

And then...
YOU'RE DYING, THOR.
BUT NOT YET DEAD.
WHO CALLS ME FROM THE VOID...?
DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME, THOR?
WE USED TO BE SO CLOSE, YOU AND I.
WHY, WE WERE ALMOST THE SAME PERSON.
DONALD BLAKE.
MY OTHER SELF.

CREATED BY ODIN TO *HIDE* YOU, EVEN FROM YOUR OWN *MEMORY*...YOUR "SECRET IDENTITY." BUT I GOT *TIRED* OF BEING A STORY... A *LIVING FICTION*...
AYE, I REMEMBER.
...SO I ASKED THE *ENCHANTRESS* TO GIVE ME WHAT ALL ODIN'S *OTHER* CHILDREN HAD. TO MAKE ME A *GOD*.
AMORA ALWAYS HAS A PLAN *WITHIN* THE PLAN. SHE DID AS YOU *BID*... BUT ON *HER TERMS.*
SHE STOLE YOUR *BODY*--THE GREATER PART OF YOUR *SUBSTANCE*--TO BUILD THE *KEEP*, HER FAMILIAR. A *GOD*... OF *SORTS*.
YOUR *HEAD* I PLACED IN A LAND OF *DREAMS*, WHERE THE REMAINS OF YOUR SOUL MIGHT BE *CONTENT*...
...AND THERE, THE WORLD-SERPENT *JORMUNGANDR* FOUND YOU. YOU HAD GROWN *STRONGER*, IN YOUR DREAM-REALM...BUT YOUR SOUL WAS STILL *WEAK*.
HE *CORRUPTED* YOU--
HE WOKE ME TO THE *TRUTH!*
THAT YOU PUT ME IN A *BOX* AND *FORGOT* ME! LIKE A *TOY!* LIKE I WASN'T *REAL!*
AND THEN YOU DID IT *AGAIN*--HANDED ME OFF TO *LOKI!* DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT LOKI *DID?* DO YOU KNOW WHERE *I AM*, THOR?
NOT *HERE*...?
ONLY MY *MIND*. WE'RE *CONNECTED*, THOR--EVEN NOW. *MY* EYES ARE BURNED AWAY, BUT I SEE THROUGH *YOURS*.
AND WHILE YOUR SPIRIT LINGERS *HERE* IN THE VOID-LAND OF *VIDBLAINN*...WE CAN *SPEAK*. AS WE DID *ONCE BEFORE*.
REMEMBER WHAT I SAID TO YOU *THEN?*
ABOUT *MIDGARD'S END?*

THIS IS THE FUTURE THAT WAITS FOR EARTH WITHOUT YOU--
--IF YOU ARE NOT AT THE RIGHT PLACE, AT THE RIGHT TIME, TO TILT THE BALANCE.
SO YOU ONCE SAID...
YOU SOUND DOUBTFUL, THOR. YOU'VE SEEN GAEA'S WRATH--FELT THE POWER OF THE UTGARD-GODS. DO YOU THINK I LIED TO YOU THEN?
DO YOU THINK I'M LYING TO YOU NOW?
DON'T I HAVE AN HONEST FACE?
...
WHAT DO YOU WANT, BLAKE?

WE'RE *CONNECTED*, YOU AND I. MAYBE IF *YOU* DIE, *I* DIE. MAYBE IF YOU DIE, I'M *FREE*. MAYBE THEY'RE THE *SAME THING*.
I WANTED TO SEE FOR *MYSELF*.
I WANTED TO *WATCH*.
REMEMBER, THOR?
OD'S BLOOD...
THERE ARE FORCES THAT PREFER YOU *DEAD*. CREATURES OF VIDBLÄINN THAT DO NOT *LIKE* THEIR GUESTS TO LEAVE...THAT WANT TO MAKE YOU *ONE* OF THEM.
LIFE IS A *FIGHT*, THOR-- AND YES, YOU FOUGHT YOUR WAY BACK FROM THIS DARK REALM *ONCE*...
BUT *NOW?*
NOW YOUR WAY BACK TO LIFE IS *BROKEN*. THE PATH IS *SHATTERED LIKE STONE*.
SO FIGHT ALL YOU *WANT*...

"...YOU HAVE *NOTHING* LEFT TO FIGHT *FOR*."
SACRE BLEU.
I *STILL* CANNOT BELIEVE. YOU *MURDERED* THOR, HYDE--AND I--I *HELPED* YOU!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT CAPTAIN AMERICA WILL *DO* TO US? MON DIEU, MY LIFE IS *OVER!*
THAT'S THE *DIFFERENCE* BETWEEN US, FRENCHIE. I FEEL *MY* LIFE HAS JUST NOW *BEGUN*.
WHEN DOES HE TURN INTO *MEAT?*
A *MINUTE*, YOU SAID. I WANT TO SEE *GOD-BLOOD* SPILLING IN THE DIRT--*FOR MISTER HYDE TO LAP LIKE A DOG!*
THE *ULTIMATE BLASPHEMY*, DUVAL! *CULMINATION OF MY GREAT WORK!*
THIS IS PARIS ALL OVER AGAIN.
I CANNOT WATCH.
WHAT ABOUT *YOU*, COBRA? ARE *YOU* FRIGHTENED OF A LITTLE BLOOD...?
ON THE CONTRARY, I'M FASCINATED BY THE PROCESS.
I THINK... WE *SHOULD* LOOK.
WE SHOULD *FACE* WHAT WE HAVE--
AH.

HRRR! CHEN!
IF THAT'S *YOU* DOING THAT--
NO, HYDE.
WHATEVER THIS *IS*...
...IS NOT ME.

THE STONE SPELL WORE OFF.
THANK YOU, GARGOYLE. *WELL SPOTTED.*
GET *READY,* GENTLEMEN.
I DON'T THINK HE'S GOING TO BE *PLEASED* WITH US.
AYE.
VERILY.

SHRA-KROOOM
CHEN!
DID YOU STOP GLOWING? TELL ME YOU DID NOT STOP GLOWING!
IT...NNHH... TAKES MORE THAN THAT...
BUT NOT MUCH MORE.
YOU ARE ALL FIGHTING ME IN A PLACE WITH NO CIVILIANS--WITH NOTHING TO HOLD ME BACK--WHILE IN THE COMPANY OF A WALKING BOMB.
DID YOU THINK THAT THROUGH?
WE SHOULD GO.
YOU'RE MADE OF STONE, YOU COWARD!
IF RADIOACTIVE MAN DOES FULLY LOSE CONTROL, THIS AREA COULD BE UNINHABITABLE FOR CENTURIES. THOR'S BLUFFING.
I THINK HE'S BLUFFING.
GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME! QUEENSBURY RULES, SIR!
LET GO OF THAT HAMMER AND FIGHT ME LIKE A MAN--

AS YOU WISH.
KRUNGG
IS--IS THAT ALL YOU *HAVE*, YOU LITTLE *BLIGHTER*?
IS THAT ALL YOU--?
KRAK
NAY.
I ALSO HAVE MY *AX*.
TORMOD, THE WISE ONE, THE KEEN EDGE. *TORMOD*, THAT CUTS *OAK* LIKE *BUTTER*.
TORMOD...
...WHOSE BLADE HATH *ALREADY* TASTED *MORTAL BLOOD*.

YOU ARE BLUFFING...
AM I? I HAVE FOUGHT RAGNAROKS, LITTLE COBRA. I HAVE BEEN THE DEATH OF GODS.
DO YOU THINK I WILL NOT STOOP TO YOUR RED SLAUGHTER?
DO YOU?
NO.
BOSS? I KNOW YOU'RE LISTENING.
PULL US OUT.
WELL DONE.
WAS IT?
A GANG OF ROGUES THAT BARELY TROUBLED ME BEFORE I WAS ALL-FATHER-- AND THROUGH SURPRISE AND TRICKERY, THEY NEAR BESTED ME.

THE ALL-POWER CAN DO MUCH--BUT IT CANNOT PULL TOGETHER A PILE OF SUNDERED MEAT, AND THAT IS WHAT I NEARLY BECAME.
IT SEEMS I OWE MY LIFE TO YOUR TIMELY INTERVENTION...
...WEREN'T YOU?
...ENCHANTRESS.
WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT I WANT, THOR--MY SON, RESTORED. AND I TOLD YOU I'D FIND SOME WAY TO PERSUADE YOU.
BUT THEN, YOU WERE ALREADY A LITTLE BIT PERSUADED...
Thor was. Neither magic nor blackmail nor Amora's charms could ever bind him... but his own conscience was a different matter.
He owed her. And so the die was cast.
After this day, Asgard would never be the same.
HOME, THEN.
IT SEEMS WE HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS.

And elsewhere, there was also much discussion... among Midgard's newest Gods.
SO HOW DO WE THINK THAT WENT?
HOW DO YOU THINK, AGGER? COBRA AND THE FRENCHIE TURNED COWARD! "BOO-HOO, WE KILLED THOR!"
IS THIS A PARLOR GAME TO YOU, SIR? DO YOU IMAGINE I DOSE MYSELF WITH AN EVIL POTION EVERY DAY FOR THE CHANCE TO NOT KILL THOR?
IF WE HAD KILLED THOR, I'D AGREE, HYDE. BUT WE ONLY MADE HIM MAD...
WE DID WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO--PREVENT THOR FROM MENDING HIS REPUTATION ON EARTH. ANYTHING MORE WAS ALWAYS A BONUS.
WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW IS HOW HE SURVIVED...
THE ENCHANTRESS' DOING--AT LEAST ACCORDING TO THE AUDIO SURVEILLANCE I LEFT BEHIND.
EXCELLENT, MR. VOORHEES. WE'LL USE THAT WHEN WE LEAK THAT THE ENCHANTRESS IS THE NEW ROXXON C.E.O.
THAT WAY SHE CAN TAKE THE BLAME FOR WHATEVER IRON MAN MAKES PUBLIC DURING HIS WAR WITH THE COMPANY. SEE HOW IT ALL COMES TOGETHER?
AS FOR THOR... YOU'LL GET YOUR REMATCH, HYDE. AND WE NEEDN'T GO TO HIM FOR IT.
HE'LL COME TO US.
And so it would prove. Both in ways the Minotaur planned for...and ways none could foresee.
But that is another tale.

Meanwhile, in Ullr's hall, a story that had ended before its time sought new continuation...
THE FIRE IS LIT, BROTHER.
THE SECRET FLAME OF ASGARDIAN MAGIC, BUILT AS I BUILT IT IN THE LONG-AGO. BE WARY--FOR IT IS THE FIRE OF DOOM.
A THING BOUND TO FATE, AS SURELY AS IF BY THE NORNS' OWN THREAD...
WARY I SHALL BE, BROTHER ULLR. AND THANK YOU--IN LOKI'S ABSENCE, NO OTHER COULD HAVE DONE IT.
I AM NO LONGER MASTER-MAGICIAN OF ASGARD, BROTHER, NOR WILL I DECIDE WHO IS. BUT I DO WHAT I MAY FOR MY KIN.
NO GOOD WILL COME OF THIS, THOR. THE MERE FACT IT TAKES SUCH MAGIC TO ACHIEVE SHOULD TELL YOU THAT.
FOR THE LAST TIME, WILL YOU NOT RECONSIDER?
I HAVE DONE, SIF--MANY TIMES. BUT I WAS NOT WITH YOUNG IRIC IN HIS HOUR OF NEED, AND HIS MOTHER WAS WITH ME IN MINE.
THUS, HONOR LEADS MY MIND TO THE PLACE MY HEART ALREADY WAITS.
IRIC DESERVES VALHALLA--BUT HE ALSO DESERVES TO SEE HIS MOTHER AGAIN IN THE LIVING LANDS. WHAT COMES AFTER THAT, WE WILL DECIDE.
WELL SPOKEN, THOR.
THIS FIRE WILL BE THE FOCUS OF MY SPELL, THY ALL-POWER THE FUEL. HAVE NO FEAR--YOU WILL NOT BE GRANTING ME ANY MEASURE OF THAT COSMIC MIGHT.
INSTEAD, YOU WILL SIMPLY CHANNEL IT THROUGH ME, INTO ULLR'S FLAME...

...AND THROUGH THIS, MY SON WILL BE RESTORED.
IRIC.
I WOULD HAVE YOU SPEAK HIS NAME, AMORA.
FOR IT OCCURS TO ME THAT YOU HAVE MORE THAN ONE SON IN NEED OF RESTORING.
OVE-- YOUR CHILD AND NAMOR'S FROM A POSSIBLE FUTURE-- LOST HIS MAGIC, AND MUCH OF HIS STRENGTH, IN A BATTLE WITH CAPTAIN MARVEL.
YOU SWORE VENGEANCE ON HER...AND I KNOW HOW YOUR MIND WORKS.
USING ME TO FURTHER YOUR CAMPAIGN AGAINST CAROL WOULD BE AN ELEGANT REVENGE ON US BOTH...
I DO OWE CAROL DANVERS MUCH, THOR, AND I'M SURE YOU AND I WILL FIGHT OVER THE BILL--WHEN IT COMES DUE.
BUT DO YOU HONESTLY THINK I WOULD CHOOSE A CHILD FROM A FUTURE THAT WILL NEVER BE OVER THE BABY I HELD IN MY ARMS?
THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH OVE. I GIVE YOU NOT JUST MY WORD, BUT MY OATH...
...AND I SWEAR THAT OATH UPON MY OWN BLOOD.

NOW LET MY BLOOD SEEK ITS OWN!
AND AT THE ALL-FATHER'S WILL--THROUGH THE ALL-POWER HE SUMMONS--LET MY SON BE FOUND!
AYE, EVEN PAST THE VEIL OF DEATH! PAST NOTHINGNESS ITSELF! PAST ALL DOORWAYS, ACROSS ALL VOIDS! PAST FATE ITSELF, TO REWEAVE THE THREADS LONG BROKEN!
LET MY CHILD RETURN TO ME!
The words echoed like the thunder in the deep--for this was deep magic indeed.
Ancient powers crashed and collided in fire and lightning, tearing open what was long sealed, shattering a lock that the structure of the universe itself had set in place.
And when that great and terrible work was done...
...Amora knew triumph.
MY SON.
MY SON IS ALIVE.

THEN IT IS FINISHED? GLAD I AM OF IT--MUCH MORE OF THAT WOULD HAVE BURNED THE EYES FROM MY HEAD...
MY EYES SEE PLAIN.
AS DO MINE.
THOR... THIS IS NOT RIGHT...
I KNOW, SIF--YOU ADVISED ME AGAINST THIS COURSE. BUT THE DEED IS DONE NOW.
I OWED AMORA TOO MUCH--AND IRIC, LIKEWISE--
BUT THAT'S NOT IRIC, THOR.
AND IT'S NOT OVE EITHER.
IT'S SOMEONE I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
WHAT?
THAT VOICE.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE, AMORA?
I REMEMBER... A BATTLE FOR ASGARD'S VERY HEART AND SOUL.
YOU WERE THERE, MOTHER. AND YOU, LADY SIF. I FELL IN THE FIGHT, AND YOU BORE ME AWAY...AND THEN...
...THEN TIME ITSELF ENDED...
MOTHER?
IS THAT YOU?

IF IT'S ANY CONSOLATION, YOU WERE RIGHT.
IRIC DESERVES PEACE--AND OVE MADE HIS OWN BED. STILL, I DID STUDY CERTAIN FUTURE TIMELINES FOR OVE'S SAKE.
AND I LEARNED IN SUCH STUDIES THAT I HAD HAD ANOTHER SON... IN A FUTURE THAT WAS AND IS NO MORE...
BECAUSE MY FUTURE SELF UNDID IT ALL--AND WITH GOOD REASON.
THAT FUTURE THOR GIFTED ME HIS MEMORIES, TO ENSURE NO PART OF HIS DARK TALE COULD EVER HAPPEN AGAIN...
NO PART, THOR?
WAS IT ALL SO DARK AND TERRIBLE?
WAS HE...?
SOME BARRIERS SHOULD NOT BE BROKEN, AMORA. BUT... NO.
TO LOSE HIM--THAT WAS DARK. BUT HE WAS THE LIGHT OF THAT DARK AGE...
YOU ALL SPEAK IN SUCH RIDDLES. WHERE AM I? CAN THIS BE NEW ASGARD?
ALL-FATHER THOR...IS THAT TRULY YOU...?
'TIS I.
HELLO, MAGNI.

HELLO, *MY SON.*

THE SON OF THOR

18

“A SON IS BETTER, EVEN IF BORN LATE,
AFTER HIS FATHER’S DEPARTURE.
GRAVESTONES SELDOM STAND
BY THE WAY-SIDE UNLESS RAISED BY
A KINSMAN TO A KINSMAN.”

- FROM “THE HIGH ONE’S LAY,”
THE ELDER EDDAS OF SAEMUND SIGFUSSON

Would you know more?
Then know this: that some tales **end.**
In a past cycle, before the last of the great Ragnaroks, Thor found himself bereft of the **humility** he had learned over centuries.
In this lessened state, he grew **wrathful** with Midgard, and--allied with evil old **Loki** and **Amora the Enchantress**--he sought to work the realm of iron into his **own design.**
A **dark future** was thus created... yet even in Lord Thor's **shadow,** one light shone. For he and Amora had a **child,** who bore the best parts of **both** their natures.
The boy's name was **Magni.** He was the **God of Strength,** and the **hope of Asgard.**
And then his tale **ended.**

Lord Thor unmade that future, granting the memory of it to his younger self as a warning. And Magni was unmade with it.
Yet now he stood in Thor's own hall, his ending unwritten.
To be continued.
I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND, MOTHER.
IT'S QUITE SIMPLE. I TRICKED THOR--WELL, GUILTED HIM IS MORE ACCURATE--INTO BOOSTING MY MAGIC WITH THE ALL-POWER.
THAT GAVE ME THE POWER TO RESCUE YOU FROM THAT DEFUNCT TIMELINE WHEN I SPIED YOU IN IT.
THAT I CAN FATHOM. BUT THE WHY OF IT CONTINUES TO ESCAPE ME...
WHY?
BECAUSE THOR'S GOING TO DIE, OF COURSE.
WHAT...?
THERE HAVE BEEN PROPHECIES AND AUGURS, MAGNI. DOUR PORTENTS SHOWN ME BY A BLACK WINTER.
DEATH HANGS O'ER MY HEAD, 'TIS TRUE...
...BUT 'TIS ALSO TRUE THAT THE GOD OF THUNDER WILL NEVER YIELD TO IT.
NOT WITHOUT A FIGHT...

I'M GLAD YOU HAVE SUCH FAITH IN YOURSELF, THOR. BUT IF YOU'RE WRONG, ASGARD NEEDS AN HEIR.
WHERE WOULD THE ALL-POWER GO, IF NOT TO YOUR CHILD?
AND YOU PLAN TO BE THE POWER BEHIND THE POWER, DO YOU?
I'M WILLING TO ADVISE THE THRONE. IT'LL BE NICE TO BE "QUEEN MOTHER" AROUND HERE INSTEAD OF "OCCASIONAL PRISONER"...
BUT YOU ARE NOT MY MOTHER. HOW CAN YOU BE?
IN THIS TIME, I WAS NEVER EVEN BORN!
NOR IS THIS THOR MY TRUE FATHER...
AYE. THE THOR WHO SIRED YOU WAS DAMAGED-- MISSING THE PART OF ME THAT IS GAEA-SON AS WELL AS ODIN-SON.
A STERN PARENT, FROM THE MEMORIES HE GAVE ME...
...AND I WOULD NOT BE THAT.
THERE IS A GAME THAT MORTAL FATHERS PLAY WITH MORTAL CHILDREN. I ALWAYS HOPED I WOULD ONE DAY ATTEMPT IT MYSELF.
OH? WHAT IS THIS GAME CALLED?
CATCH.

THAPP
HA!
I KNOW THAT YOU NOW DECIDE WHO IS WORTHY TO HOLD THE HAMMER, ALL-FATHER.
BUT TO ENTRUST MAGNI WITH IT SO SOON...?
I HAVE LET YOU DOWN BADLY OF LATE, SIF.
YET I AM NOT SO TRUSTING AS YOU MAY THINK.
FOR I DID NOT DEEM HIM WORTHY.
Hmm.
I THOUGHT IT SEEMED A TOUCH HEAVIER.

BUT... HOW...?
IS THERE FINALLY SOMETHING THE WILY ENCHANTRESS DID NOT PREDICT? THAT MAY BE WORTH ALL OF THIS.
'TIS TRUE-- TO THOSE DENIED IT, THE HAMMER IS AS HEAVY AS IT NEEDS TO BE.
BUT MY SON IS THE GOD OF STRENGTH.
HE IS WHAT HE NEEDS TO BE, ALSO.
AYE...BUT IF I HAVE NOT TRULY EARNED THIS HAMMER IN THINE EYES...
...I'LL THROW IT BACK.
'TIS GOOD THAT YOU DO.
THAP
THAP
FOR THAT IS THE GAME. CATCH.
TELL ME-- DID YOUR THOR EVER TAKE YOU HUNTING?
AYE. 'TWOULD BE GOOD TO DO SO AGAIN.
WHAT QUARRY WOULD WE PURSUE, MY NOT-QUITE-FATHER? CATCH!
THAP
WHY, THE MOST REWARDING ON MIDGARD...
SUPER VILLAINS.

And so the hunt began.
And on Midgard-- on a cold rooftop-- the quarry awaited.
SO WHAT ARE WE NOW? GODS OF BAIT? CHEESE IN THE TRAP?
I'M BORED, GENTLEMEN.
I'VE A MIND TO TELL AGGER WHERE HE CAN STUFF HIS MONEY--
INTO YOUR BANK ACCOUNT TO JOIN THE FIRST MILLION WE EARNED, I HOPE.
YOU'RE BEING FAR TOO EMOTIONAL...
OF COURSE I'M EMOTIONAL!
I AM ALL DARK EMOTIONS MADE FLESH--WHICH YOU PROVOKE AT YOUR PERIL, SIR!
AND MONEY IS LITTLE GOOD TO ME WHILE I'M PACING BEHIND THE BARS OF A CAGE!
HYDE IS RIGHT. WHY THE MIDDLE OF MANHATTAN? WHY A ROOFTOP?
ALL THIS-- IT IS TOO MUCH IN THE OPEN.
I HAVE NO WISH TO RETURN TO AN AMERICAN PRISON, MES BRAVES...
WOULD THAT BE SUCH A PROBLEM FOR YOU, GARGOYLE?

EH? MAIS, BIEN SUR--IS IT NOT SO FOR *YOU*?
I HAVE NO PLANS TO BE APPREHENDED. THOR IS *OUT OF FAVOR* WITH THE AUTHORITIES--THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO *KILL* HIM.
BUT IF WE *FAIL*...
...*THEN*, UPON MY ARREST, I WILL BE TAKEN TO AN *UNREMARKABLE BUILDING* AND AN *UNREMARKABLE ROOM*, AND THERE I WILL *WAIT*.
WITHIN THE DAY, THERE WILL BE A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. CERTAIN INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES HAVE SPOKEN TO CERTAIN OTHERS. *DEALS* HAVE BEEN STRUCK.
I WILL BE ASKED--*POLITELY*--TO DO SOMETHING VERY *QUIET*, OR SOMETHING VERY *LOUD*. BUT ALWAYS VERY *DENIABLE*.
AND WHEN I AM DONE? I GO *HOME*.
AND I COUNT MY *MONEY*.
SUCH IS THE LIFE OF A RADIOACTIVE MAN.
YOUR SMUGNESS IS INTOLERABLE, SIR!
AND IF I MUST *BEAT* IT OUT OF YOUR GREEN HIDE, THEN BY GOD, I--
HYDE!

UP THERE.
The day was fine and clear--yet now, hanging above their heads like a **sword**...the **rainbow**.
No mortal who saw the sign in the sky did not know what it portended.
There was no need for any **further** display of power...
...unless it was to make the point **clear**.
RRUMMBLLE
Thor was coming.
He came to take **vengeance**...
YOU **BEGAN** THIS, VILLAINS OF MIDGARD--
...and he did not come **alone**.
--AND NOW THE GODS OF ASGARD END IT!
WHEN WE ARE **DONE**, YOU WILL CONFESS TO **EVERY CRIME** AGAINST ME--

--BEGINNING WITH WHOSE HAND IS BEHIND THIS!
SPEAK, ROGUES--AND PERHAPS I WILL SHOW MERCY...
HERE IS MY CONFESSION, SIR! WRITTEN IN BLOOD!
I HAVE MADE MYSELF THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF ALL THE EVILS OF MAN--
--AND I DID IT FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN SPITE!
TO SPIT IN THE FACE OF LOVING GODS LIKE YOU!
WHO...?
HYDE. NAMED FOR A TALE--A MORTAL FICTION THAT HOLDS HIM LIKE A DEMON.
A BRUTE OF UNIMAGINABLE STRENGTH...
UNIMAGINABLE, YOU SAY?

BECAUSE I--
WHAPP
--CAN IMAGINE A LOT!
HYDE?
MON DIEU...
SUH... SERUM...
EASY, CALVIN. DON'T TRY TO TALK--
MY SERUM. MY FORMULA. I KNOW YOU HAVE SOME, COBRA.
I NEED MORE...
A DOUBLE DOSE? ZABO, IF I DO THAT, IT'LL KILL YOU--
IF YOU DON'T, IT'LL KILL YOU!
MORE, I SAID!
MORE!

...
MAKE IT COUNT.
MY COBRA GAS WILL BUY YOU A LITTLE TIME.
IT WON'T LAST LONG IN THIS WEATHER, BUT IF YOU'LL PARDON THE IRONY, IT GIVES US A MOMENT TO BREATHE...
GARGOYLE-- AS BEFORE!
TAKE THE ADVANTAGE WHILE THEY'RE BLINDED--
BUT I AM SIF, WHO GUARDS THE RAINBOW BRIDGE. SISTER OF HEIMDALL, BEQUEATHED HIS GIFTS. I AM NEVER BLIND.
AND COMPARED TO THE SERPENTS I HAVE BATTLED, COBRA...
WHOKK
...YOU ARE A PETTY SNAKE INDEED.

COBRA IS DOWN--BUT HIS SMOKE REMAINS.
AND WITH IT, MY CHANCE TO EVEN THE ODDS--
--LIKE SO!
PARDON, MADAME!
OH, DON'T APOLOGIZE. THIS IS FASCINATING.
A SPELL OF TRANSMUTATION, CONTAINED IN YOUR TOUCH...
...BUT QUITE A PRIMITIVE ONE, DON'T YOU THINK?
SO EASILY COUNTERED.
NO!
OH, DON'T FUSS. I'VE DONE YOU A FAVOR.
GRAY REALLY WASN'T YOUR COLOR...

BE SURE THY SPELL IS *TEMPORARY,* AMORA.
LEST YET *ANOTHER* MORTAL CRIME BE LAID AT MY DOOR...
THESE "SUPER VILLAINS" ÷KAFF÷ ARE FOUL BEINGS INDEED!
WHAT CURSED MIASMA IS *THIS* THAT BRINGS SUCH TEARS TO GODLY EYES?
A NOXIOUS BREW THAT HAS GIVEN ME TROUBLE *ENOUGH* OF LATE!
STORM WINDS, BLOW IT *HENCE*--AND LET US SEE OUR FOES *PLAIN!*
A FINE SIGHT INDEED! THE BATTLE IS ALL BUT *WON!*
ONLY *ONE* OF THE ROGUES IS LEFT TO ANSWER THY QUESTIONS--
TWO, ACTUALLY.
SO PLEASE. ASK AWAY.

KROOM
AMORA-- MAGNI CANNOT FLY UNAIDED! USE YOUR MAGIC TO CATCH HIM!
IS THAT A NOTE OF WORRY I HEAR, THOR? THE LAD MEANS SOMETHING TO YOU?
A REDHEADED STEPCHILD...?
MAGNI WOULD SURVIVE THE FALL--ANY MORTAL HE LANDED ON WOULD NOT.
NOW THERE'S A PLEASANT NOTION!
TWO BIRDS WITH ONE--
KRANNG
ARRRGHH!
THERE IS A LESSON FOR THE BOY TO LEARN HERE. AND FOR YOU, HYDE.
THERE IS NO LEVEL OF STRENGTH THAT WILL AID YOU...

...IF YOU CANNOT LAND THE FINAL BLOW.
BRAVO.
FOUR GODS AGAINST FOUR MERE MORTALS, THOR. HARDLY AN EQUAL CONTEST...
I CALL IT TURNABOUT, DOCTOR. YOU OUTNUMBERED ME BEFORE--NOW THE ROLES ARE REVERSED.
BUT MY OFFER OF MERCY STANDS.
CONFESS ALL--AND THIS CAN END HERE.
A GENEROUS OFFER, THOR.
AND I'M HAPPY TO MAKE A DEAL...
...BUT NOT WITH YOU.
ASTRID MORA!

ALIAS AMORA OF ASGARD--ALIAS THE ENCHANTRESS!
YOU ARE UNDER ARREST FOR CORPORATE FRAUD AND GRAND LARCENY!
IF YOU AND THOR DO NOT SURRENDER IMMEDIATELY, WE WILL USE FORCE!
POLICE
ROXXON
OH, DEAR.
WELL, I SUPPOSE THE GAME HAD TO END SOMETIME.
THIS WAS A GAME TO YOU, AMORA?
CONGRATULATIONS, THEN--YOU WON ALL YOU WANTED.
BUT THANKS TO YOU, I HAVE LOST ALL THE TREASURES OF THIS WORLD...
...AND WE WILL TALK MORE OF THAT, BELIEVE YOU ME.
BUT FIRST, WE MUST BRING YOUNG MAGNI HOME TO HEAL. CALL THE BIFROST, LADY SIF.
IF CHEN WILL NOT TELL HIS SECRETS, WE CAN DO NO MORE HERE...

LIVE FROM ROOF OF ROXXON HQ: ASGARDIAN TERRORISTS ESCAPE JUSTICE
"...SAVE MAKE A BAD SITUATION WORSE."
THERE. AMORA'S SINS FIND HER OUT, AT THE VERY SCENE OF HER CRIME--AND THE MUD STICKS NICELY TO THOR, AS WELL.
GOOD LUCK MENDING YOUR TATTERED REPUTATION NOW, ODINSON...
ON A RELATED TOPIC--HOW LONG BEFORE MY RETURN TO THE BOARDROOM, MR. LOWRY?
DARIO AGGER JR. SHOULD BE READY FOR PUBLIC APPEARANCES IN THREE WEEKS OR SO. SORRY IT AIN'T SOONER, BUT IT'S BETTER TO TAKE THE TIME.
EVEN WITH THE GROUNDWORK WE LAID ON YOUR NEW IDENTITY, IT'S STILL QUITE A LIE WE WANT FOLK TO SWALLOW HERE--UH, BEGGING YOUR PARDON, SIR.
I DO APPRECIATE THE BEGGING, LOWRY.
BUT DON'T FRET--I UNDERSTAND. THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TRUE GODS OF MIDGARD AND THOSE... TOURISTS.
WE UNDERSTAND THE RULES...
...AFTER ALL, WE WROTE THEM.
And Dario Agger laughed, in good humor, and toasted his invented son...the company that would soon be his again...

...and most of all, toasted his Pantheon.
And on the road out of Manhattan, his laughter found an echo.
DAEDALUS LLC
PRIVATE PRISON SOLUTIONS
HA! HA HA HA HA HAAA!
SOMETHING FUNNY, HYDE? ASIDE FROM YOUR FACE.
SO RARE TO SEE YOUR CALVIN ZABO FORM THESE DAYS...
THE MORE SERUM I TAKE, THE FASTER IT BURNS OUT. I'LL REMEMBER THAT IN THE FUTURE.
BUT THAT'S NOT THE JOKE, COBRA.
IT'S ALL CHEN'S BIG TALK FROM EARLIER. LOOK AT HIM NOW!
A BIG NOTHING, SEALED IN A LEAD-LINED SUIT IN THE SAME BLACK MARIA AS THE REST OF US! ALL SHIPPED BACK TO RAVENCROFT TOGETHER!
I SEE PESSIMISM IS ONE OF THOSE LOWER EMOTIONS YOU'VE CHOSEN TO EMBRACE, DOCTOR ZABO.
BUT YOU'RE RIGHT, IN ONE RESPECT. WE FOUR TRAVEL THE SAME ROAD, IT SEEMS...AND IT WILL ARRIVE AT THE SAME PLACE.
A MOST UNREMARKABLE ROOM...

DAEDALUS LLC
PRIVATE PRISON SOLUTIONS
A SUBSIDIARY OF
ROXXON
INCORPORATED
...IN A MOST UNREMARKABLE *BUILDING.*
TO BE CONTINUED

"MAY ALL MEN'S LOT BE BETTERED,
ALL WOMEN'S SORROW LESSENED,
TO WHOM THIS TALE OF WOES
SHALL BE RECOUNTED."

– FROM "GUDRUN'S INCITEMENT,"
THE ELDER EDDAS OF SAEMUND SIGFUSSON

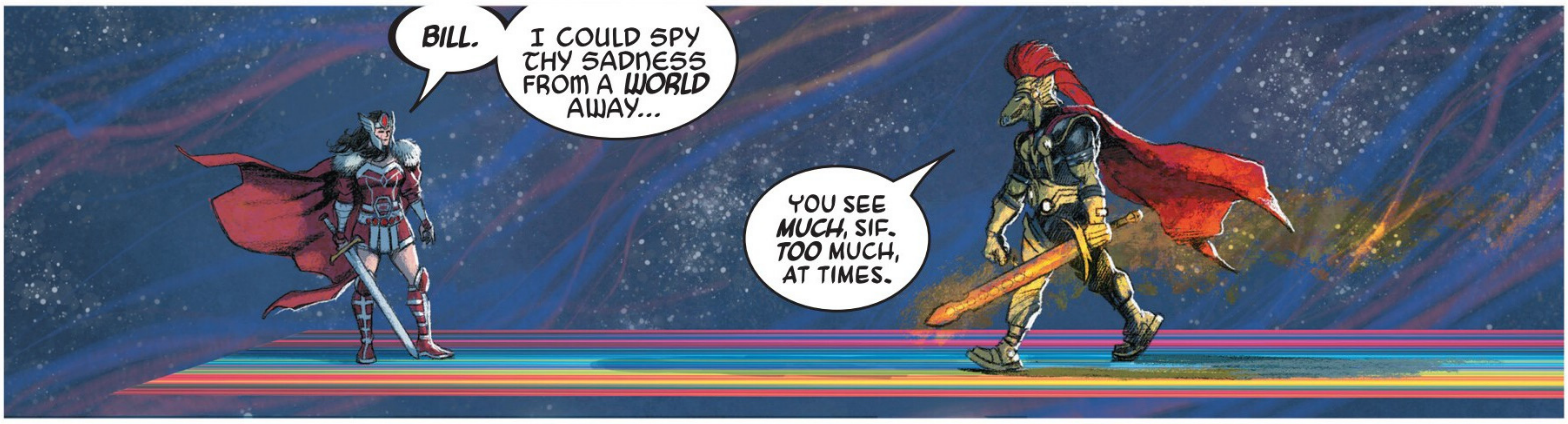
Would you know more?
Then know **this**--the story I tell now is **not** the story of Thor.
For as it began, Thor undertook a journey to the **far stars**--to seek out one whose advice he had long been without, and whose presence he sorely missed.
Thor marks this tale only with his **absence**. For it is not a tale of a **king**, but of a **kingdom**--and thus it is **many** tales, all wound together.
And the tales began with **Sif**, the love Thor had no longer...

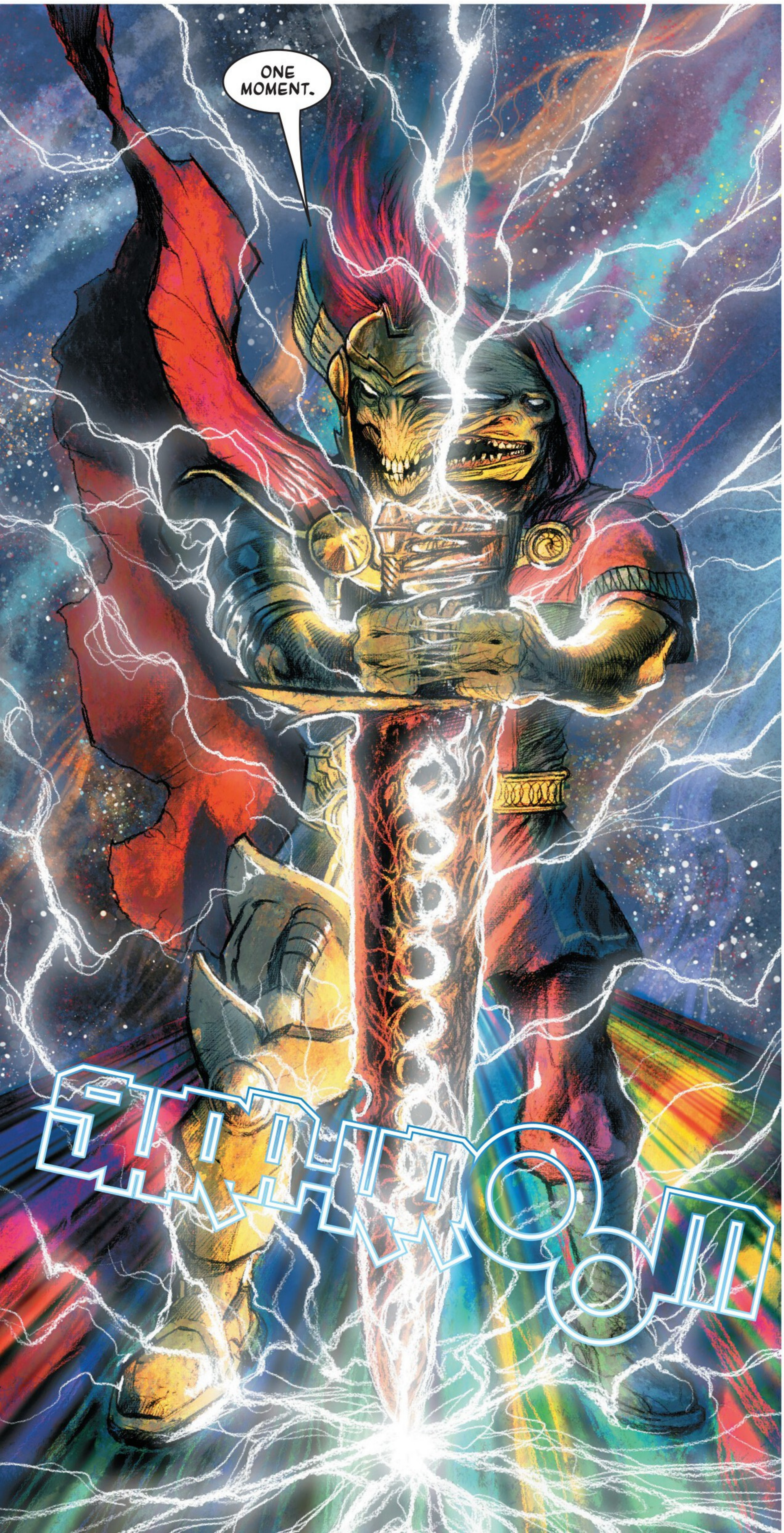
...and with Magni, the son he had never sired.
IS FATHER HERE, LADY SIF? I HOPED TO SPEAK TO HIM.
YOU HAVE MISSED HIM BY A HAIR, MAGNI.
AND I AM STILL NOT USED TO HEARING HIM CALLED THAT...
NOR I, IN TRUTH. I KNOW THAT MY TRUE PARENT IS A THOR WHO WILL NOW NEVER COME TO BE.
YET THOUGH MY MIND KNOWS IT, STILL MY TONGUE MAKES THE ERROR--AND EACH TIME, IT CATCHES ME OFF GUARD...
PERHAPS 'TIS THY HEART THAT ERRS.
'TIS STRANGE FOR THOR TOO, I KNOW. HE SWORE THAT ASGARD'S THRONE WOULD NEVER HAVE AN HEIR...
NOR DOES IT NOW. THAT WAS MOTHER'S SCHEME, SIF, NOT MINE--I WANT NO PART OF IT.
IN TRUTH, I DO NOT EVEN RECOGNIZE THIS ASGARD. I RECALL THE GOLDEN REALM AS A LEGEND IN RUIN...
THEN EXPLORE OUR GOLDEN REALM, MAGNI. IF YOU DO NOT KNOW US, LEARN US.
LET THE LEGEND COME ALIVE AROUND YOU... AND THUS, FIND YOUR PLACE IN IT.
HA! I SEE ONE THING IS AS IT IS IN MY WORLD--
--THE LADY SIF HAS A WISE WORD FOR EVERY OCCASION!
LET ME FIND ASGARD, THEN--AND FIND MYSELF!

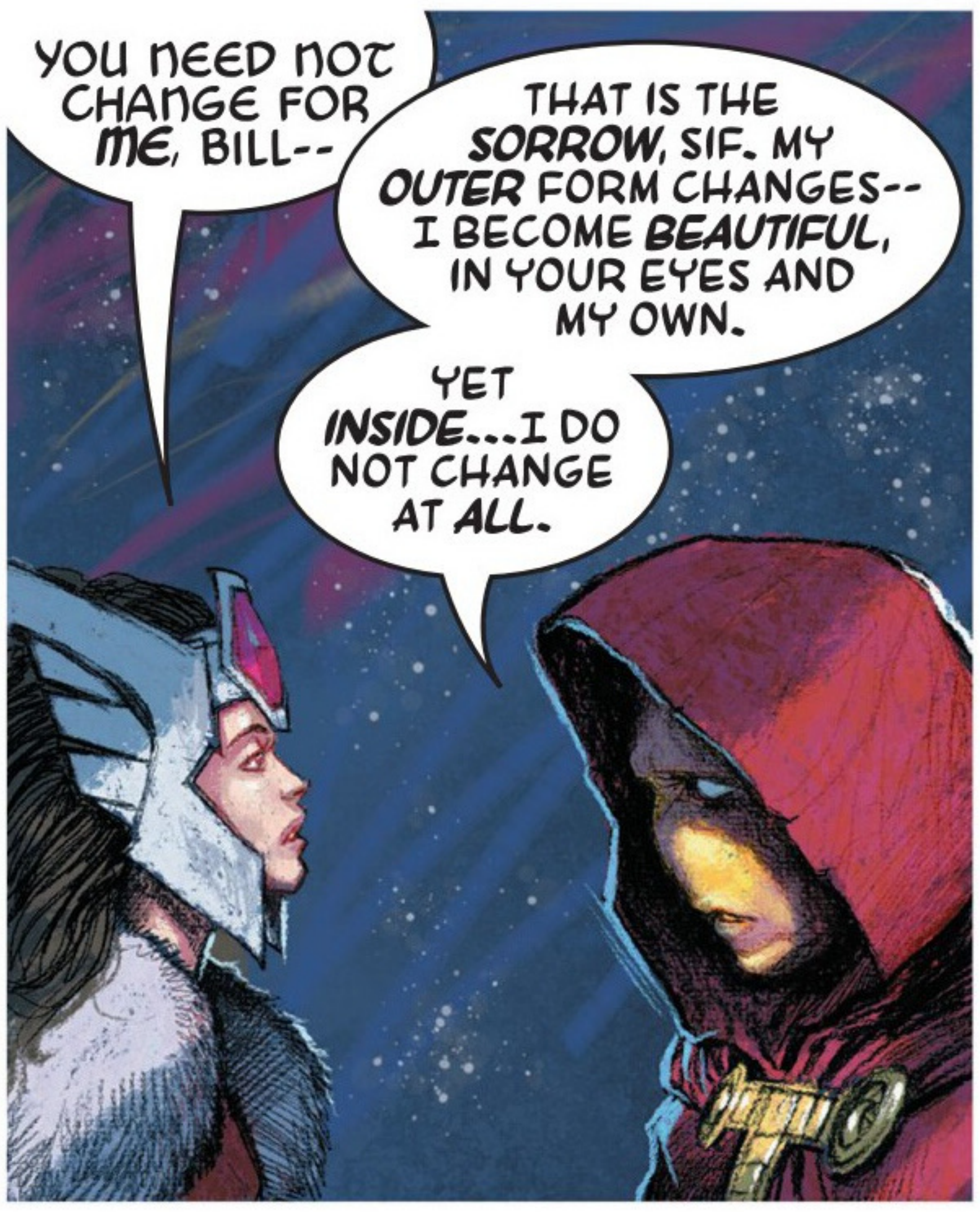
THAT WAS MOTHER'S SCHEME, SIF, NOT MINE--I WANT NO PART OF IT.
OH, MAGNI. WHICH MORTAL WAS IT WHO WROTE OF A SERPENT'S TOOTH?
AND THE ALL-POWER DOES NOT CARE WHAT HE WANTS. IT PASSES THROUGH THE FAMILY LINE. ODIN TO THOR... THOR TO HIS SON.
AND IF MAGNI SHOULD PERISH AFTER THOR...WOULD THE ALL-POWER TRAVEL BACK? CHILD TO PARENT...?
THE MOST TERRIBLE CRIME... TO GAIN THE MOST UNIMAGINABLE POWER...
IS THAT TRULY WHO I AM...?
KNOCK KNOCK

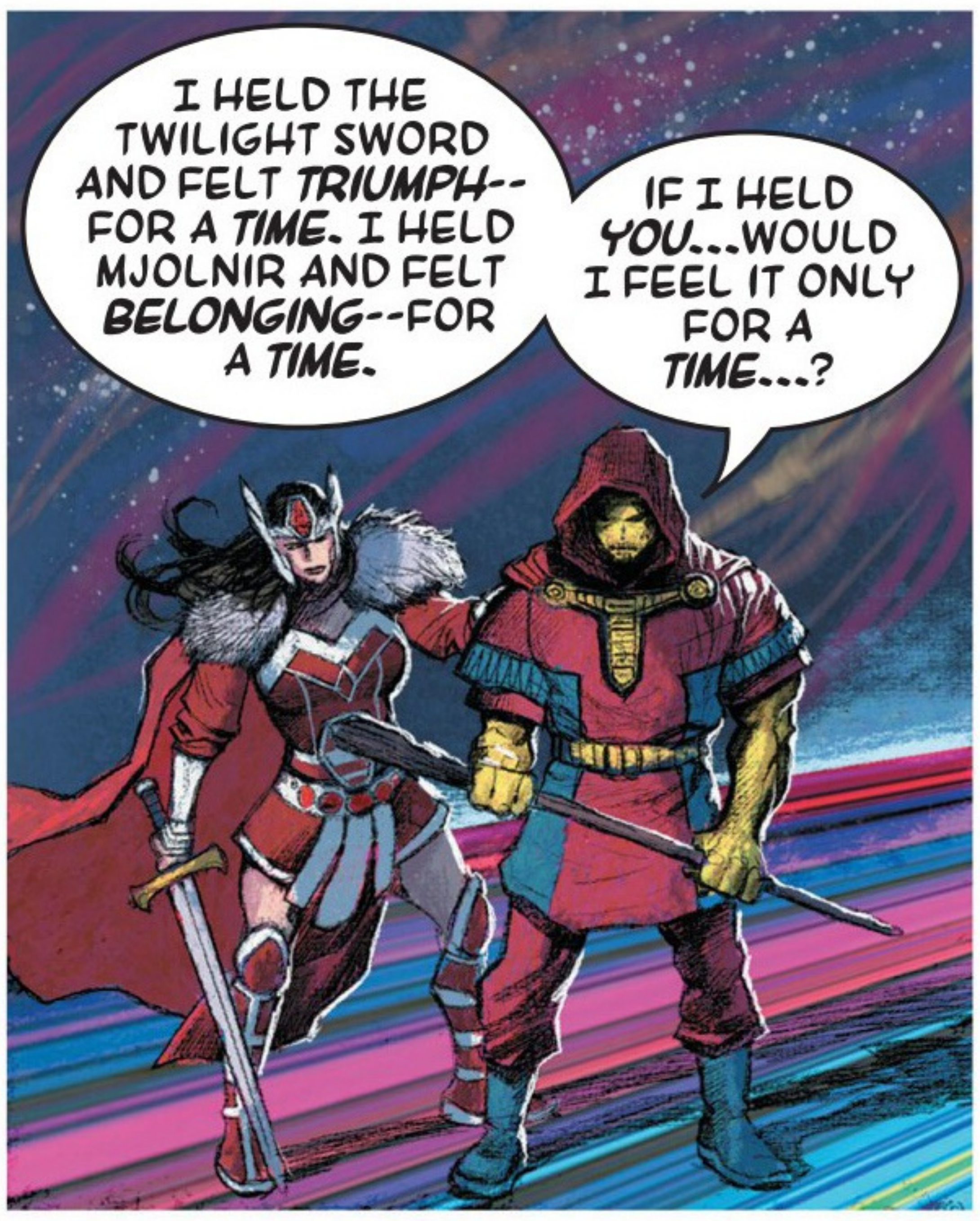
DID YOU LAUGH?
WHEN YOU USED ME AS A PAWN. WHEN I SAW YOU AS A FRIEND AND YOU SAW ONLY A TOOL.
DID YOU LAUGH, ENCHANTRESS?
NO, SKURGE.
NO, I DIDN'T LAUGH.
BUT I DID USE YOU. TO GAIN POWER, AYE--AND BECAUSE IF I MUST CHOOSE YOU OR THOR TO LIVE, I CHOOSE YOU.
ARE YOU ANGRY?
WHO RAGES AGAINST THE SCORPION FOR HER STING?
I'M GLAD YOU WANT ME AROUND, AMORA--BUT YOUR SCHEME WASTED VALUABLE TIME. STEALING THOR'S DEATH WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT.
YET SOMEHOW I MUST.
WHY MUST YOU? YOU ARE ALIVE AGAIN, SKURGE!
YOU COULD DO ANYTHING--EVERYTHING--
AH, AMORA.
WHAT USE IS EVERYTHING IF I LOSE THE ONE TRUE THING I HAD?
And Amora had nothing to say.
For Skurge's words cut deep...

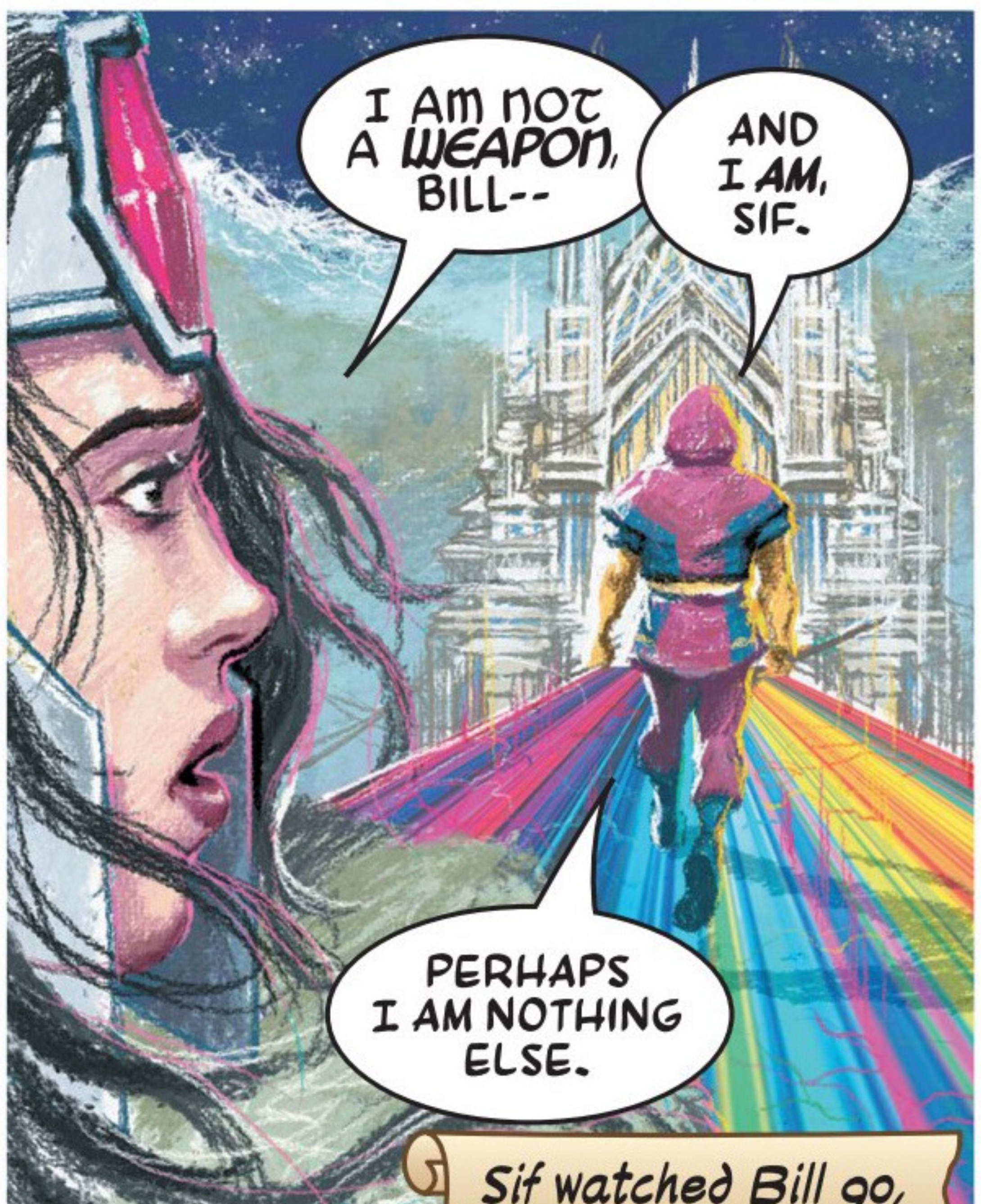
...deep as the edge of the Twilight Sword that Beta Ray Bill now bore into battle.
Famed was he across all Asgard, both then and in futures untold...and thus, 'twas natural that Magni sought him out first.
HA! A MIGHTY BLADE INDEED!
YOU SAY THIS BELONGED TO SURTUR, BILL?
I TOOK IT WHEN I ENDED HIM... BUT THAT IS NOT A MEMORY I ENJOY RELIVING.
AND THERE ARE THINGS I WOULD ASK OF YOU...MAGNI, WAS IT?
THOR'S SON FROM THE FUTURE...?
FROM A LOST FUTURE-- A TIMELINE IN WHICH THOR PURGED HIS HUMANITY.
THEY SAY I WAS BORN WITH THE HUMAN SPIRIT HE LACKED.
YET EVEN IN THAT DARK TIME, THE NAME OF BETA RAY BILL WAS ETCHED IN ASGARD'S HALL AS THE MOST HEROIC OF THE GODS WHO CALLED IT HOME.
I HOPE THAT BRINGS YOU CHEER, MY FRIEND...
IT SHOULD. I APOLOGIZE THAT IT DOES NOT.
I AM NOT A GOD, MAGNI. NOR AM I HUMAN. I AM THE LAST OF A RACE I AVENGED, BUT FAILED TO PROTECT...
...AND SOMETIMES I WONDER IF I CAN HAVE A HOME.
HERE OR ANYWHERE ELSE.


BILL.
I COULD SPY THY SADNESS FROM A WORLD AWAY...
YOU SEE MUCH, SIF. TOO MUCH, AT TIMES.


ONE MOMENT.
SHHHOOM


YOU NEED NOT CHANGE FOR ME, BILL--
THAT IS THE SORROW, SIF. MY OUTER FORM CHANGES-- I BECOME BEAUTIFUL, IN YOUR EYES AND MY OWN.
YET INSIDE...I DO NOT CHANGE AT ALL.


I HELD THE TWILIGHT SWORD AND FELT TRIUMPH-- FOR A TIME. I HELD MJOLNIR AND FELT BELONGING--FOR A TIME.
IF I HELD YOU...WOULD I FEEL IT ONLY FOR A TIME...?


I AM NOT A WEAPON, BILL--
AND I AM, SIF.
PERHAPS I AM NOTHING ELSE.
Sif watched Bill go, and did not follow.

She had her duty...to guard the bridge, to bear vigil against those who would harm the realm...
...and she had her own sorrows.
Following an impulse, she looked to the stars...
...and beyond the stars, to the distant galaxies. To the edge of the universe, the borderlands of all creation.
Straining her inherited gift of sight to its utmost...Sif beheld the Far Shore.
Somewhere beyond that realm was her brother's spirit.
If she could only see him, once more...would he be at peace?
Was Heimdall happy, lost in a plane of wonders?

Or was he simply lost?
RUN, HERMOD! ASGARD MUST BE WARNED! THOR MUST KNOW!
NRGL RISES!
THE CITY OF DEATH IS ALIVE!
I--I CAN'T LEAVE YOU, HEIMDALL--
But in the endless city, a moment's hesitation was doom.
And far off, in the hall where the secret fire was tended...

...Ullr--the God of Doom--was watching too.
AYE, TRICKSTER. IN THE FLAME OF THE SECRET FIRE HAVE I SEEN IT ALL.
AND WHAT IS SEEN WILL NOT BE AVOIDED...
BUT WHAT SAYS ATHENA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK WISDOM? DO YOU AGREE?
WHAT CARD HAVE YOU DRAWN FOR THOR ALL-FATHER?
BEHOLD, ULLR.
THE CARD OF WHAT MUST BE.
XIII
DEATH
DARKNESS.
DARKNESS AND THE TURN OF THE WHEEL...
ULLR!
GET OUT HERE!
...
WE'LL CONTINUE THIS LATER.

SKURGE THE EXECUTIONER.
YOU SPEAK THUS TO THE LORD OF THE YEW?
WHY NOT? I'VE ALREADY DIED, REMEMBER?
AND I WANT THAT DEATH BACK.
BUT TO STEAL THOR'S WEAPONS AND HIS DEATH, I NEED AN AX OF MY OWN--WITH MAGIC IN IT.
AND WITH LOKI BANISHED, YOU'RE THE MASTER-MAGICIAN OF ASGARD...
FIND ANOTHER.
THE MORTAL STRANGE IS ADVENTURING IN THIS REALM.* WHY NOT SEEK HIM OUT?
BECAUSE I'VE TRIED MORTALS AND THEIR TOYS, AND NOW I WANT THE REAL THING! AND YOU CAN DO IT!
NAME YOUR PRICE, OLD MAN.
SKURGE WILL PAY IT.
THEN ON YOUR SOUL BE IT, DEAD WARRIOR.
ON YOUR SOUL BE IT.
And as Skurge entered the Yew-God's hall...

*FIND OUT WHAT STEPHEN STRANGE IS DOING HERE IN MARCH'S DOCTOR STRANGE OF ASGARD #1!

...Magni found himself entering a more salubrious establishment...
HO! METHINKS I HEAR THE RUCKUS OF A TAVERN-BRAWL! WHO HERE NEEDS THE AID OF...
...THE GOD OF STRENGTH...?
PARDON MY POSTERIOR, GOOD RUFFIANS! BUT YOU BROKE MY CHAIR UPON MY FRIEND'S HEAD--AND VALOROUS VOLSTAGG MUST HAVE A PLACE TO SIT!
WHAT HAVE I TOLD YOU ABOUT TAKING CHAIR SHOTS, HOGUN? NO MORE THAN THREE BETWEEN MEALS!
ALL I DID WAS WISH THE BIG ONE'S MOTHER A HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HILDEGARDE! FANDRAL, TELL HER!
ACTUALLY, HOGUN, YOU SAID, "EACH YEAR MAY BRING YOU CLOSER TO DEATH, BUT REJOICE, FOR DEATH IS THE END OF CARE."
AND COULD YOU ASK HIM IF SHE'S SPOKEN FOR...?
...and quickly taking his leave again.
METHINKS FIVE IS A CROWD...
Likewise, in Valhalla, there was feasting and fighting to be had...

...but the liege of that great hall was in poor spirits.
LORD ODIN? 'TIS PASSING STRANGE TO SEE SUCH A DARK COUNTENANCE AT THE ETERNAL FEAST...
FAR FROM STRANGE--FOR ME. I WAS NOT MADE FOR IDLE PLEASURES, BRUNNHILDE.
I WAS MADE TO WANDER--TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE AND MAKE IT MINE. BUT INSTEAD, I SPENT MY LIFE AS A KING ON A THRONE.
NOW I AM NOTHING.
A GHOST AMONG GHOSTS, ALL AWAITING A RAGNAROK ALREADY COME AND GONE.
WHILE MY SON FACES DEATH AND I CANNOT SAVE HIM...NOR WOULD HE THANK ME FOR IT... AND...
...AND HE DOES NOT VISIT ME HERE...
LORD ODIN? I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMEONE CALL ME. IS SOMEONE AT THE GATE...?
NONE WHO MAY ENTER.
LEAVE IT BE, YOUNG IRIC. LET IT GO.
THE DEAD HAVE NO BUSINESS WITH THE LIVING.

GATE OF VALHALLA! GREAT DOOR THAT SITS ON THE BORDERLINES OF DEATH!
I AM JANE FOSTER, SHE WHO IS LAST AND FIRST VALKYRIE! AND I BID THEE OPEN!
OPEN AT ONCE!
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT WOULDN'T WORK.
FINE. I SPEAK AS MYSELF, THEN--AND I SPEAK TO ODIN. I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME, ONE-EYE.
I HAD A CHANCE--ENGINEERED AT GREAT COST--TO SAY A FINAL GOODBYE TO MY SON, IF I WISHED TO. INSTEAD, I CHOSE A ROAD TO POWER.
IT SEEMED WISE. IT SEEMED LIKE THE WAY TO GET EVERYTHING I WANTED.
BUT WHAT USE IS EVERYTHING?
PLEASE, ODIN, HEAR ME. I...I WOULD CHOOSE AGAIN...
But Odin was dead.

LIFE IS A PRECIOUS THING INDEED, MAGNI.
I AM GLAD YOU HAVE A SECOND CHANCE AT IT.
AND YOU ARE **WISE** NOT TO SEEK THE THRONE OF ASGARD. I KNOW IT BRINGS MY **BROTHER** LITTLE JOY.
HE KNOWS WHAT **I** KNEW, WHEN I RULED IN ASGARD AND IN HEL--THAT A KING SHOULD BE **SERVANT** TO THE PEOPLE...AND **SACRIFICE** FOR THEM, IF NEEDS MUST.
BETTER TO LIE IN **GREEN GRASS**, LISTEN TO **BIRDSONG**...
...AND KNOW **PEACE**.
'TIS **PLEASANT**, UNCLE BALDER... BUT...
BUT YOU'RE **BORED SILLY**.
ROAM **FREE**, THEN, YOUNG MAGNI.
I HOPE YOU FIND PEACE **SOMEWHERE** IN ASGARD.
I HOPE SO TOO.
*And as Magni continued to search for his **place** among the realms...*

...his great-great-grandfather stood beyond them.
HMM.
IT'S A NICE HALL, OLD TRICKSTER. I'LL ADMIT THAT.
AND IT HAS GIVEN ME A TITLE, TIWAZ--
--THE UTGARD-LOKI. THOUGH MY TRUE NAME REMAINS MY OWN AND NOT TO BE SPOKEN.
JUST VISITING, I HOPE...?
YOU'VE NAUGHT TO FEAR FROM ME, NOR YOUR ALLIES.
I'LL NOT TEAR THE HOOD FROM THE HOODED ONE, NOR YOKE THE GREAT BULL, NOR MAP THE ENDLESS CITY.
GAEA CHOSE TO SET YOU LOOSE ON HER REALM, AND I RESPECT THAT--
--BUT TEST ME NOT IN MINE, UTGARD-LOKI. TREAD NOT IN ANDLANG, LEST YE BEGIN A WAR WITH NO WINNERS.
HOW GOES YOUR CAMPAIGN, BY THE BY?
THOR WON THE FIRST ROUND, AND MOST CUNNINGLY. THUS, GAEA ALLOWED HIM A CHANCE.
BUT MIDGARD IS SET ON ITS COURSE-- AND THOR HAS LESS SWAY THERE THAN EVER. SO SHE HAS TURNED HER KEY AGAIN.
BUT WORRY NOT, OLD WANDERER. WE SHALL NOT COME TO ANDLANG.
NOT TO ANDLANG...
And with that...

...Tiwaz took his leave.
HO! WHO IS THIS WAITING FOR ME?
DID I NOT SAY I WOULD SEE YOU AGAIN, LOKI?
TELL ME, HOW IS THOR...?
HE SPOKE HARD WORDS WITH THE ALL-POWER BEHIND THEM, AND THAT KEEPS ME BANISHED FROM HIS SIGHT...
...THOUGH OUTSIDE HIS VISION, I FIND MY WAY TO ASGARD FOR MORE HARMLESS ADVENTURES IN A MORE HARMLESS ASPECT.
SOMETIMES I WONDER IF MY EFFORTS TO BE MORE HEROIC WERE TOO SUCCESSFUL.
THE MIDDLE ROAD IS HARDEST TO KEEP TO.
BUT LET ME REPHRASE, FOR I DID NOT SPIRIT YOU HERE FOR GOSSIP.
HOW GOES YOUR SPELL, LOKI?
THE FIRST ACT READIES TO END.
AND IF I MUST, I WILL BE WHO ENDS IT.
YOU SEE NO OTHER WAY?
WE HAVE BEEN IN AUTUMN TOO LONG, GREAT-GRANDFATHER.
THERE MUST BE A WINTER.
And far away...

...Amora faced her own winter.
I have been cold.
I admit that, Alvi.
I wronged both you and Iric, but if there is even a chance, my son--a chance to change--
I'll stop you there.
You traded my brother--your firstborn--to a wizard for a jewel before he was even born. You made similar deals with a dozen magical powers.
When the bill came due--and you helped save him--it seemed like you had changed. You made all the right noises.
But the next time Iric was in trouble, I was the only family who showed up. And I can't help but wonder.
When my brother died... when you weren't there for him...
...Did that cancel your debts?
I don't know what got you into this mood--but I can't trust it, mom. I can't trust you.
It's way too late for you to change now.
...
Everything, then.
And it froze her in place.

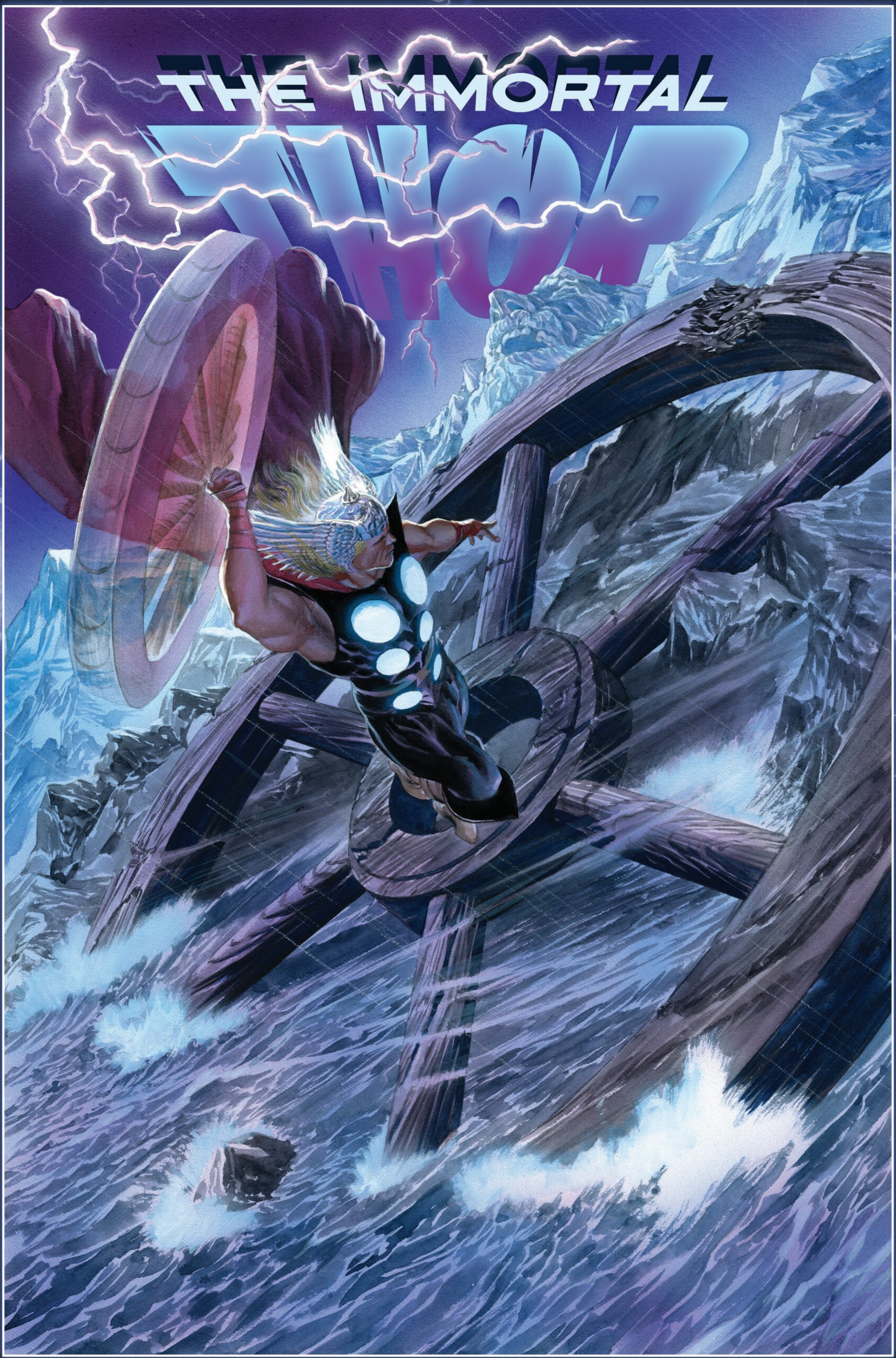
SO WHERE *IS* MY PLACE IN THIS REALM...?
I *HEAR* YA, BUDDY.
I BEEN *THERE.*
GAH! WHAT MAGIC IS *THIS?* IS ASGARD ALSO HOME TO *TALKING RABBITS?*
NAH, THOR JUST OFFERED ME A PLACE TO *STAY,* IS ALL.
TO BE HONEST, I DON'T REALLY *FIT IN* HERE.
I MAKE MY LIVING WHERE THE *ACTION* IS, Y'KNOW? BUT IT AIN'T LIKE THE GODS NEED A *MERC*...
AYE, I FEEL SIMILARLY. THE HEROES OF ASGARD DO NOT REQUIRE A *MUSCLEBOUND PRINCELING* TO CROWD THEM--
--AND YET I FIND NO PEACE IN *QUIET.*
I NEED *ADVENTURE,* LEST I JOIN BRAVE *BILL* IN BROODING OVER A *DARK PAST* AND A *LOST PEOPLE*...
WAIT--YOU'RE A *PRINCE?* AND A *MUSCLE GUY?* I USED TO *HANG OUT* WITH SOMEONE LIKE THAT.
...YOU AIN'T *REALLY STUPID,* ARE YOU, BUDDY?
I SEEK WARMTH AND KINDNESS IN A COLD WORLD, SO SOME WOULD SURELY *CALL* ME SO.
BUT MY *FRIENDS* CALL ME *MAGNI.*
BLACKJACK O'HARE.
PUT 'ER *THERE,* PARTNER.

THE DEAL IS DONE.
THE NEW BLOODAXE IS FORGED.
THOUGH THE PRICE WAS TERRIBLE INDEED...
YET I PAY IT GLADLY. WHAT IS EVERYTHING TO ONE WHO HAS LOST A TRUE THING? AND THIS EDGE IS KEEN INDEED.
TO KEEP HIS DEATH, THOR MUST HOLD HIS WEAPONS...
...AND THAT WILL BE DIFFICULT AFTER I CUT OFF HIS HANDS.
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, YOUR DOOM IS SEALED, WARRIOR.
AND A DARK DOOM IS SURELY COMING. FOR THE KEY IS ONCE MORE TURNED--THE GATE ONCE MORE UNLOCKED.
"THE UTGARD-GODS COME... AND THIS TIME...

"...THEY COME FOR ASGARD."

TALES OF ASGARD

20


THE IMMORTAL
THOR

“NOW PART WE, NOW FAREWELL!
FATE MAY NOT BE WITHSTOOD.”

– FROM “THE FIRST LAY OF SIGURD FAFNICIDE,”
THE ELDER EDDAS OF SAEMUND SIGFUSSON

Far from Asgard, Thor had been busy.
He had met with **Freyja**, who had raised him and who he still called "Mother," on a distant world of vast carnivorous beasts.
One caught their scent and went for the kill. The Odinson would have let the beast *live*...but Thor was not **God of the Hunt.**
EAT UP, SON.
IT'D BE A **SIN** TO LET ALL THIS GO TO WASTE.
And Freyja was.

MOTHER...?
I'M JOKING. THERE'S A FROMA SETTLEMENT ON AN ICE WORLD AT THE EDGE OF THE SYSTEM--REFUGEES FROM THE LAST ZN'RX WAR.
THEY'LL TAKE THE MEAT--AND THE HIDE AND THE BONES, AS WELL.
DID THEY PRAY FOR SUCH AID?
TO THEIR OWN DEITY. I SUPPOSE THAT MAKES ME HER INSTRUMENT.
IN SOME WAYS, I AM TO THE FROMA AS YOU ARE TO THE MORTALS OF MIDGARD...
SO THEY BELIEVE YOU A MURDERER AND NOW YOU MUST QUIT THEIR AVENGERS?
SORRY I AM TO HEAR OF IT.
SUCH SOUR JESTS FROM SUCH A SWEET FACE! BITTERNESS DOES NOT BECOME YOU, MY LAD.
IS THAT WHY YOU WANTED MY ADVICE?
NAY. MY SUNDERED REPUTATION IS A KNOTTY PROBLEM, MADE MORE SO WITH EACH ATTEMPT TO UNRAVEL IT--BUT 'TIS MY DILEMMA TO SOLVE, AND SOLVE IT I WILL.
THIS IS SOMETHING OF MORE IMPORT TO THEE.
WHEN LAST WE SPOKE LIKE THIS--AROUND A HUMBLE FIRE, FAR FROM ANY THRONE--I SWORE TO YOU THAT AS KING, I WOULD NEVER HAVE AN HEIR.
FATE HAS MADE A LIAR OF ME.

I HAVE A **GRANDCHILD** ON THE WAY...?
ONE IS ALREADY **HERE.**
REALLY? HAS SO MUCH TIME PASSED?
THE CHILD MUST STILL BE VERY **YOUNG...**
WELL INTO HIS **SECOND CENTURY.**
BUT YOUNG AT HEART.
HMM.
WHO IS THE **MOTHER?** THAT **GREEN** MORTAL I MET ONCE...?
JENNIFER. NAY, THE BOY'S MOTHER IS OF **ASGARD...**
...BUT SHE DOES **WEAR** A LOT OF GREEN.
AMORA?!
I WAS AS SURPRISED AS ANYONE.
COUNT TO TEN, COUNT TO TEN...
ARE YOU **WELL,** MOTHER?
YOU SEEM **VEXED.**
...
I AM **VERY, VERY GLAD** THAT YOU HAVE FOUND YOUR **LAUGHTER** AGAIN, MY SON.
SO **PLEASE.** TELL YOUR DOTING MOTHER **EVERY DETAIL.**
BEFORE I SKIN YOU ALIVE.

And so Thor did.
AND YOU'RE SURE THIS MAGNI IS TO BE TRUSTED...?
I WAS GIFTED MEMORIES OF HIM BY HIS TRUE FATHER--A THOR WHO TOOK A PATH I WAS SPARED AND LOST HIS HUMANITY SOMEWHERE ALONG IT.
YET DESPITE SUCH PARENTAGE, HE HAS GREAT HONOR AND INTEGRITY. WHEN THE DAY COMES, HE'LL BE A FINE KING.
BUT NOT YOUR CHOICE OF KING. YOUR CHOICE WAS NO CHOICE.
YOU SAID THE THRONE WAS CURSED...
I HAD BEEN GIFTED VISIONS, WHEN WE SPOKE THEN--THE DARK GIFT OF A BLACK WINTER. I SAW MY FATE...
...AND FATE WAS CRUEL INDEED.
THOR...
BUT WHEN I DEFEATED THANOS IN THE TIME OF BOR, THE SHADOW OF THAT BLACK WINTER SEEMED TO RECEDE.
I REFORGED MY HAMMER. I SAW THE MENDING OF THE BIFROST. I LEARNED TO SMILE AGAIN...
...BUT I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.
A WINTER ONLY LEAVES TO MAKE WAY FOR ANOTHER ONE.

OLD ENEMIES CHALLENGE ME ANEW. EVEN LOKI IS MY ADVERSARY AGAIN. THE OLD CYCLES STILL REPEAT, EVEN NOW...
I TRIED TO FREE US FROM THEM. I MADE A FINAL RAGNAROK, TO END THE GREAT TALES WITH MY END...
HOW QUICKLY AFTER THAT DID I FACE THE SERPENT? HOW QUICKLY DID I TAKE NINE STEPS AND FALL?
AND ROSE AGAIN. THE CYCLES ALTERED, PERHAPS... NOT BROKEN.
THE TIDE ALWAYS COMES IN...
AND YET SOMETHING HAS CHANGED.
PERHAPS I DID IT. I SUNDERED THE THREAD OF FATE AT THE END OF THE LAST AGE--PERHAPS NOW I MUST PAY THE PRICE.
OR PERHAPS I AM ONLY SOME SACRIFICE...MADE BY GAEA...OR LOKI... OR ODIN...
BUT THE DEATH THAT COMES FEELS DIFFERENT.
IT FEELS FINAL.
...
AND WILL YOU RUN FROM IT?

AYE.
I WILL **RUN** FROM MY DEATH. I WILL **FIGHT** MY DEATH. I WILL **RAGE AGAINST** MY DEATH.
I WILL EVEN **TRICK** MY DEATH--FOR AM I NOT **KIN** TO TRICKSTERS? AM I **ABOVE** A GOOD TRICK SHOULD ONE COME TO ME? **I SAY THEE NAY.**
ALL THIS I WILL DO...YET THERE IS A THING I WILL **NEVER** DO, ON MY OWN BLOOD.
AND THAT IS OFFER MY DEATH TO **ANOTHER.**
NO OTHER LIFE WILL BE GIVEN OR TAKEN TO PROLONG MY OWN.
THIS I VOW.
THEN YOU NEED NO ADVICE FROM **ME.**
PERHAPS EVERYTHING WILL **NOT** BE OKAY, IN THE END. BUT NOTHING WILL EVER **DEFEAT** YOU--NOT EVEN **THE END OF YOUR TALE.**
BECAUSE **YOU** ARE MY **SON.**
BECAUSE **YOU** ARE--
THOR!

YOU ARE NEEDED!
LADY SIF?
WHAT HAS OCCURRED, THAT YOU SHOULD LEAVE THY POST TO SEEK ME?
TORANOS HAS COME TO ASGARD.
OR RATHER, HE HAS BEEN... DELIVERED THERE...
TORANOS...?
SAY NO MORE. I WILL RETURN WITH THEE AT ONCE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR WISE WORDS, MOTHER-- BUT WE MUST CONTINUE THIS ANOTHER TIME.
It was a terse goodbye to the one who raised him.
And though Thor knew it not then...
...it was the last.
For this was the beginning of the end.
BURI'S BONES...
AS I SAID, THOR.
DELIVERED.

HELP ME...

HE WEEPS.
AND AS HE WEEPS, THE STORM STRIKES, MORE BRUTAL WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT...
IN ASGARD?
WITHOUT MY LEAVE? AGAINST MY WILL? IN MY OWN HOME?
ATTEND ME, THUNDERCLOUDS! HEARKEN TO THY LORD AND LIEGE! THE MASTER OF STORMS COMMANDS IT--THE ALL-FATHER COMMANDS IT!
CEASE THY TUMULT! END THIS UNSEEMLY DISPLAY!
NOW!
THE--THE SKIES RAGE STILL...
AYE.
I AM CNUT UPON THE SHORE, SIF.
AND MORE-- I AM TRULY THE FOOL CNUT ONLY PRETENDED TO BE. FOR I HELD HOPE THAT THE SKY WOULD LISTEN.
BUT 'TIS AS IT WAS WHEN I FOUGHT TORANOS THE FIRST TIME.
THESE THUNDERS ARE NOT MINE TO COMMAND. THEY ARE LOYAL TO HIM...
...AND NOW, THEY COME TO MOURN HIM.

TORANOS! SPEAK TO ME!
ASA-THOR...?
WHY HAVE YOU RETURNED? WHY ART THOU HERE...?
IN YOUR HEART, YOU KNOW, THOR...BUT YOU HOPE IT IS NOT TRUE...
YOU ARE A BEING OF COMPASSION.
COMPASSION THAT YOU INFECTED ME WITH LIKE A PLAGUE! WHEN I GAINED THY ACCURSED POWER!
THIS IS NOT MY DOING, THOR! IT IS YOURS!
IT IS YOURS!
YET I DID NOT DO THIS TO YOU, OLD ONE.
WHO DID?
YOU KNOW THAT, AS WELL.
AND YOU HOPE IT IS NOT TRUE.
And Toranos told his tale.

How he returned to **Utgard** to take his place among the **Utgard-Gods**, as their **equal**.
How he **spoke** to them as an equal. Charged with Thor's **own compassion**, he reached **out** to them, hoping they would see the **rightness** of his cause.
How he had **argued**...then **pleaded**...then **begged**, again and again, for the Utgard-Gods to see **his** side, to show **mercy**...
But there was no mercy in them.
The Endless City forged **steel** that could pierce an Elder God's flesh. The Great Bull **gored** him and knocked him to the ground. The Hooded One took up the **hammer**.
And under the Utgard-Loki's mocking **eye**...
...they nailed him to his wheel.

THEY SAID...IF I COULD NO LONGER BE THEIR MESSENGER... I WOULD BECOME THEIR MESSAGE...
AND THEY SENT ME HERE... TO FACE MY END, IN A SKY I HAVE NEVER KNOWN...
I AM DYING, ASA-THOR.
YOU ARE. AND NOT ALL MY POWER CAN PREVENT IT.
I CAN ONLY EASE THE JOURNEY, IF YOU ALLOW ME TO...
FIRST... FIRST THE MESSAGE.
THE BRIDGE ACROSS THE GREAT RIVER VIMUR, THAT YOU CROSSED LONG AGO, WITH LOKI...IT HAS RETURNED.
AND BEYOND IT IS THE GATE TO UTGARD'S LAND.
THAT GATE WILL SOON OPEN, THOR...AND SOMEONE MUST PASS THROUGH IT.
ONE WAY...OR THE OTHER.
AND NOW I AM DONE.
AYE. NOW ALL IS DONE.
CLOSE YOUR EYES, MY FRIEND.

And so, with one strike from mighty Mjolnir, Thor slew an Elder God.
Is this a **great deed** to take **pride** in, you who hear this? Do you see it as worthy of **worship?**
Do you believe that who you can **kill** is the measure of your **strength?**
Understand ye yet? Or **what?**
'TIS **DONE**, STORM-CLOUDS.
THY MASTER IS AT **PEACE**...
...AND I AM SORRY FOR THY **LOSS**.
You will.
You will.

THERE WAS NO SAVING HIM, SIF. WITH ALL THE POWER AT MY COMMAND, I COULD NOT DO IT.
ALL I COULD OFFER WAS MERCY...
YOUR GREAT HEART DOES YOU CREDIT, THOR.
BUT SAVE SPACE WITHIN IT TO REMEMBER THE MORTALS TORANOS SLEW ON MIDGARD-- AS IF SWATTING FLIES.
AYE, HE SHOWED NO MERCY THEN--AND HIS DEATH-THROES THREATENED TO DESTROY THE GOLDEN REALM NOW.
I KNOW IT, SIF. I KNOW.
YET HE WAS CHANGED. I CHANGED HIM-- TAUGHT HIM MY WAY.
AND NOW IT IS THE SAME AS IF I HAD SIMPLY STRUCK HIM DOWN, AS I STRUCK DOWN THE RANTING SKRYMIR... WHAT IS THIS POWER FOR, SIF?
WHAT AM I FOR...?
WHEN YOUR TWO WORLDS ARE IN SUCH NEED, THOR...YOU ALREADY KNOW.
AYE. AND NOW THIS CHALLENGE HAS BEEN MADE... THERE CAN BE NO MORE DELAYS.
JOURNEY WITH ME, MY LADY.
FIRST, TO MY HALL, TO GATHER MY MAGICAL WEAPONS...

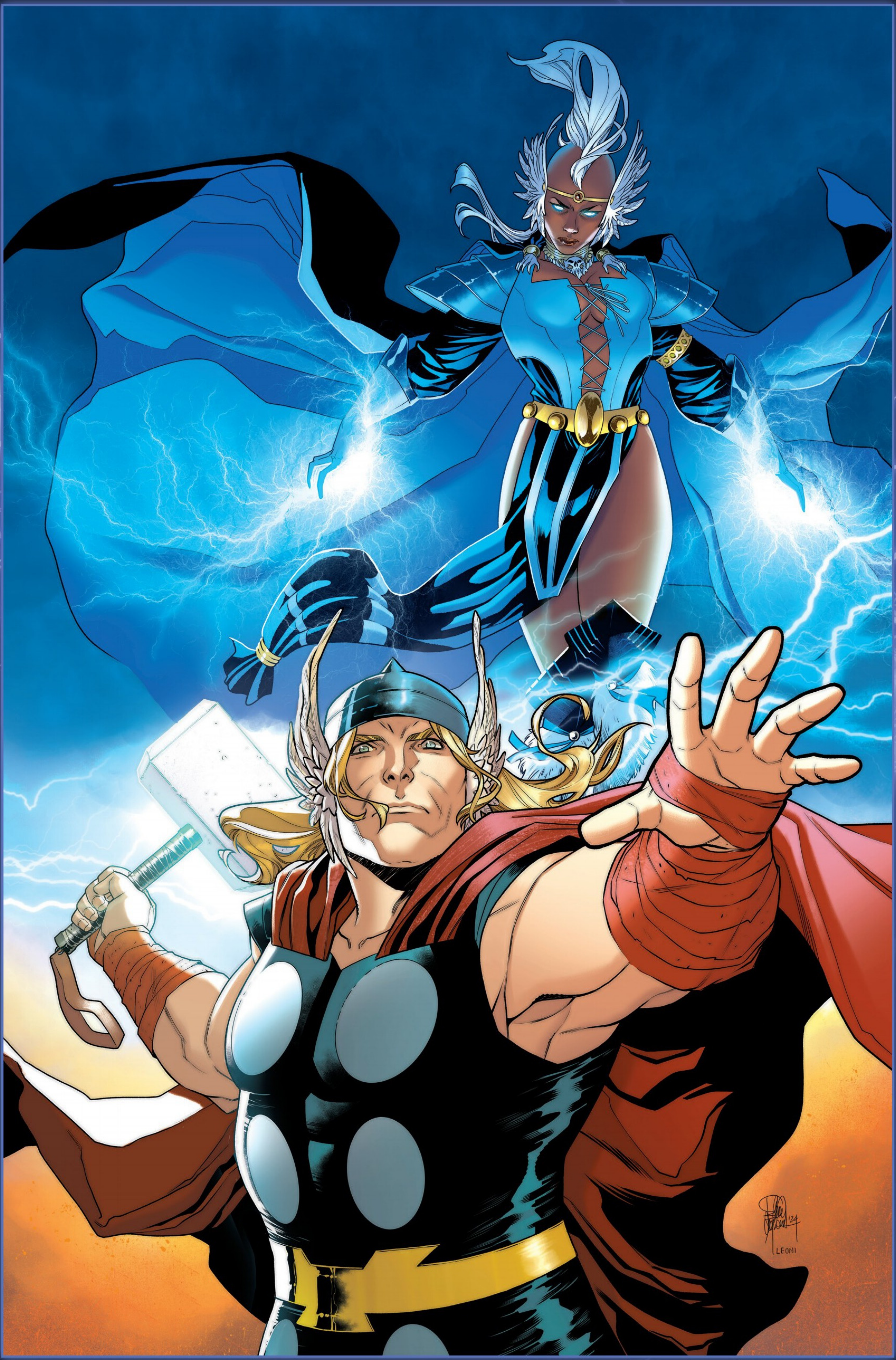
...AND THEN TO THE **EDGE** OF ASGARD--TO **VIMUR**, GREATEST OF RIVERS. AND TO THE **BLACK BRIDGE.**
THE RAINBOW'S **OPPOSITE**--FOR IT LEADS NOT TO **ALL** REALMS, BUT TO **NONE** OF THEM.
WHERE I MUST WALK NOW IS **NO REALM AT ALL**...
...NOT AS WE COUNT REALMS.
THERE IS A **DARKNESS** IN YOUR TONE I LIKE **NOT**, THOR.
LET ME GO **WITH** YOU.
BETTER YET, SUMMON **ALL** THY FRIENDS--**BALDER, JANE, BILL, HERCULES,** THE MORTAL **AVENGERS!** CALL THEM **ALL**, MY LIEGE!
COUNTLESS WARRIORS ACROSS COUNTLESS **WORLDS** WHO WOULD GIVE THEIR **LIVES** FOR THY SAKE--
AND THAT IS **WHY** I CANNOT ASK THEM. OR **YOU.**
BECAUSE YOU **WOULD** GIVE YOUR LIVES. AND I CANNOT **ALLOW** THAT...I **WILL NOT**, SIF...
I MADE A **VOW**...
THOR--
SIF...?
YOU TALK SO MUCH. AND YOU NEVER, NEVER **LISTEN.**
I HAD TO SHUT YOU UP.
...
YOU ARE A GOOD FRIEND TO ME, SIF.
AND I **WILL** SEE YOU **AGAIN.**

GLAD I AM TO KNOW IT!
THAT WAS NO KISS GOODBYE, THOR!
Thor had spoken true, though neither of them knew it. He would see Sif again--once more, at least.
But Sif...though she hoped, though she prayed to whatever Gods a God may pray to...
...had just then spoken a lie.
And a moment later, he was gone.
Vanished into the mists that shrouded the Black Bridge...
...vanished from even her sight.
PLEASE, THOR.
DO NOT MAKE THAT OUR GOODBYE.

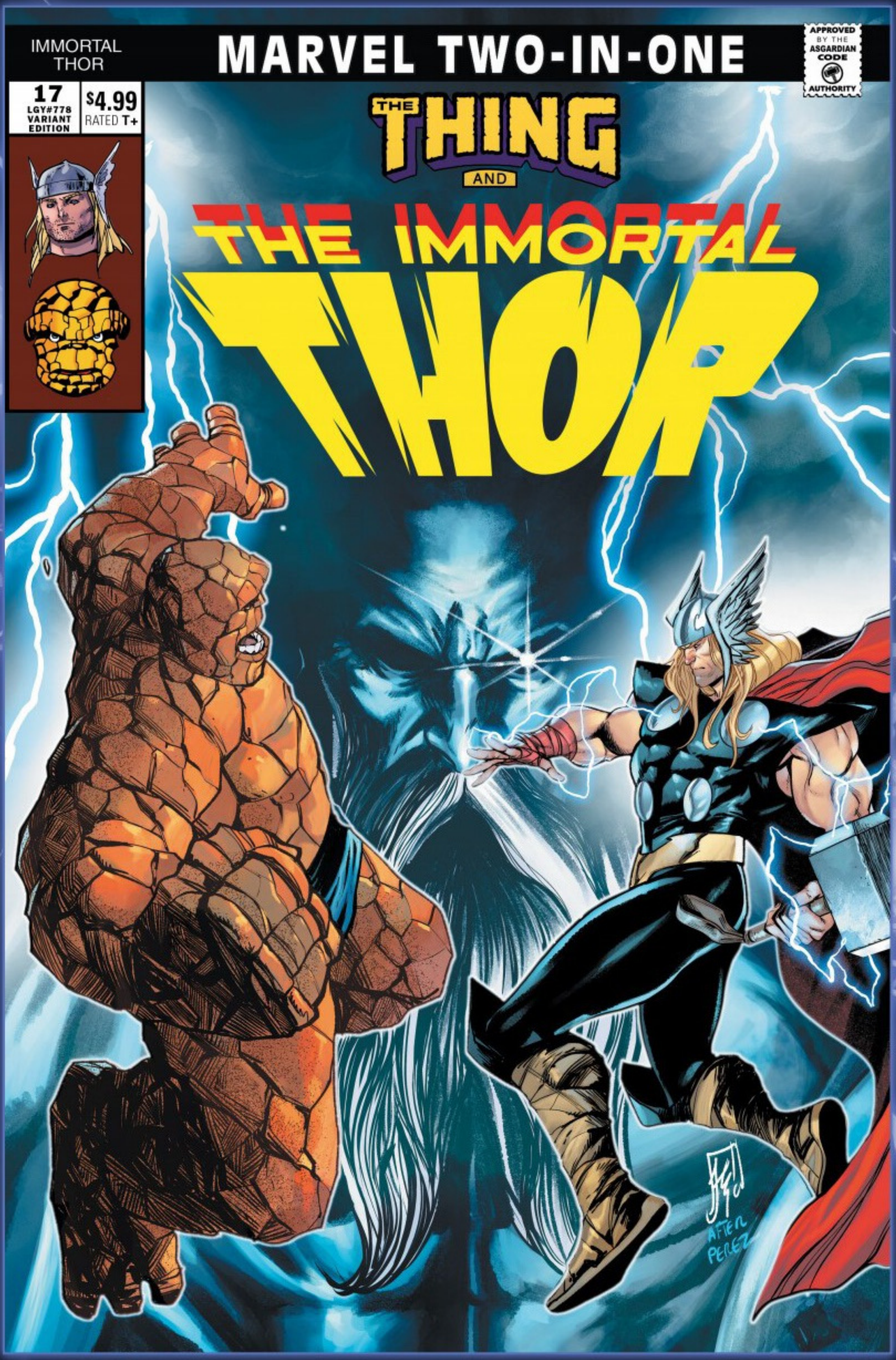
And so, Thor came once more to the dark wood.
'Tis as I RECALL it...yet where once I felt the call to ADVENTURE, I now feel only a chill of FOREBODING.
Before, I came here with LOKI as sidekick and sibling...but where is Loki NOW? Far from my sight... yet still NARRATING EVENTS, no doubt.
As my SKALD? Or as my ENEMY?
Still-- though I am ALONE, I have my WEAPONS about me.
TORMOD, ax of my WIT AND WILE...
--YOLGJÖRD, that is my ENDURANCE...
...and Mjolnir makes THREE, of course. GREATEST of hammers-- OLDEST of my tools.
TOGETHER, they should be enough.
But Thor was wrong, and twice over.
Mjolnir did not make three. Thor had but two of the magical weapons he would need.
And Thor was not alone in the dark wood.
THOR! Look UPON me, All-Father!
I have tasted your death ONCE! And ONE WAY OR ANOTHER--

--THE EXECUTIONER WILL TASTE IT AGAIN!
Neither was Skurge.

INTO THE DARK

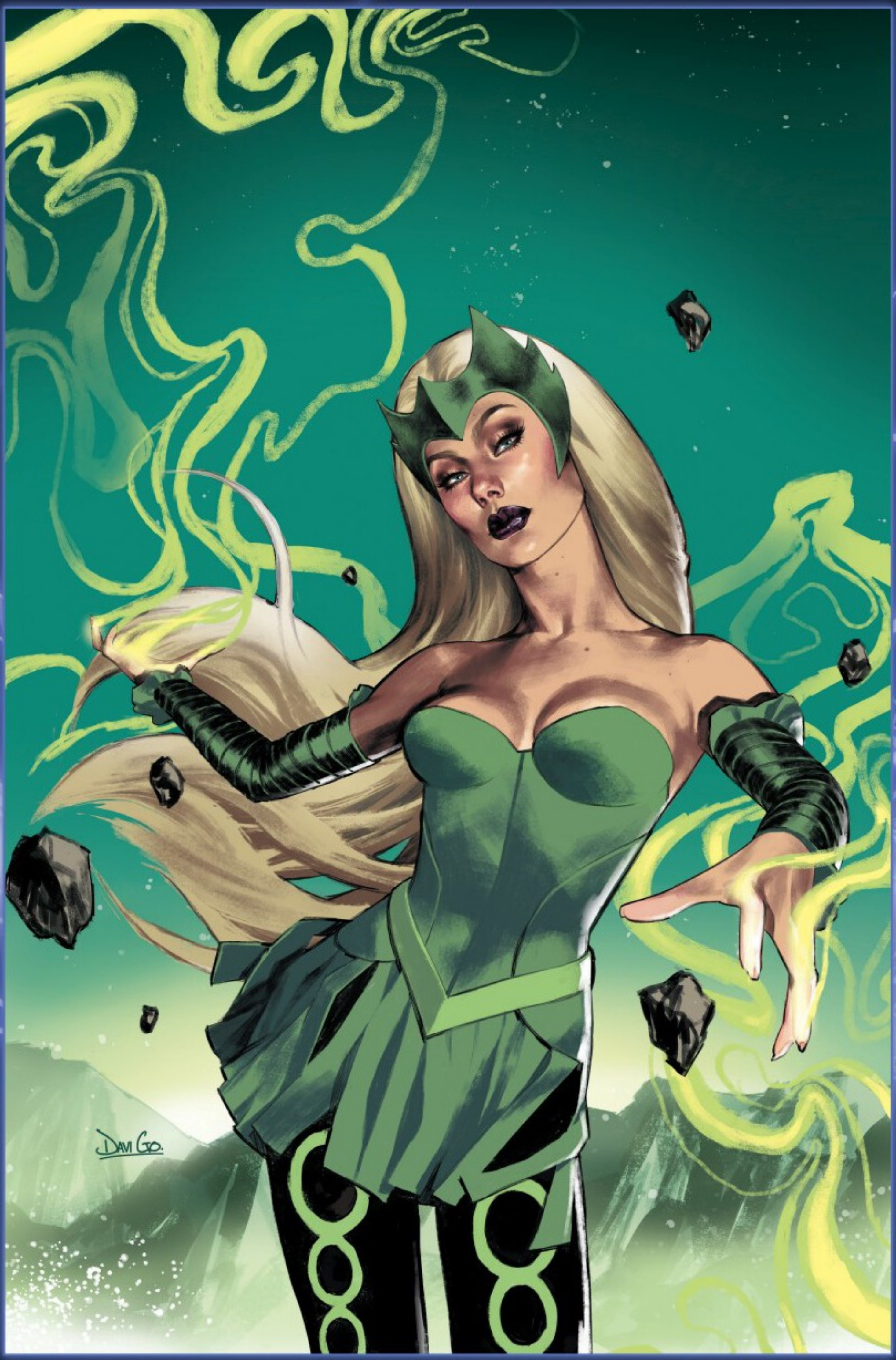


16 STORMBREAKERS VARIANT BY **ELENA CASAGRANDE** & **ANNALISA LEONI**


IMMORTAL THOR
MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE
17
LGY#778
VARIANT EDITION
$4.99
RATED T+
APPROVED BY THE ASGARDIAN CODE AUTHORITY
THE THING
AND
THE IMMORTAL THOR

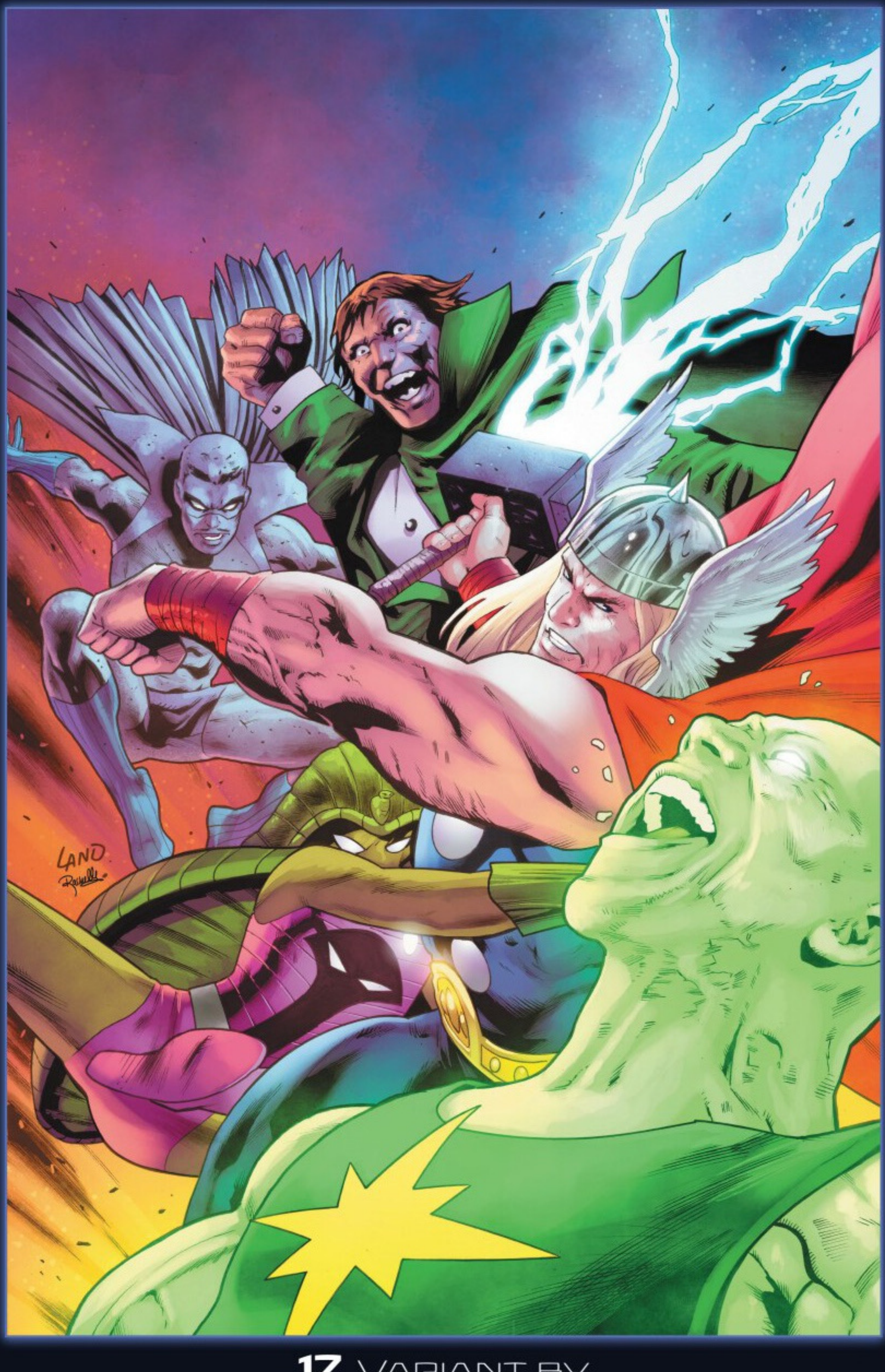
17 Marvel Two-In-One Variant by

Stefano Caselli & Federico Blee



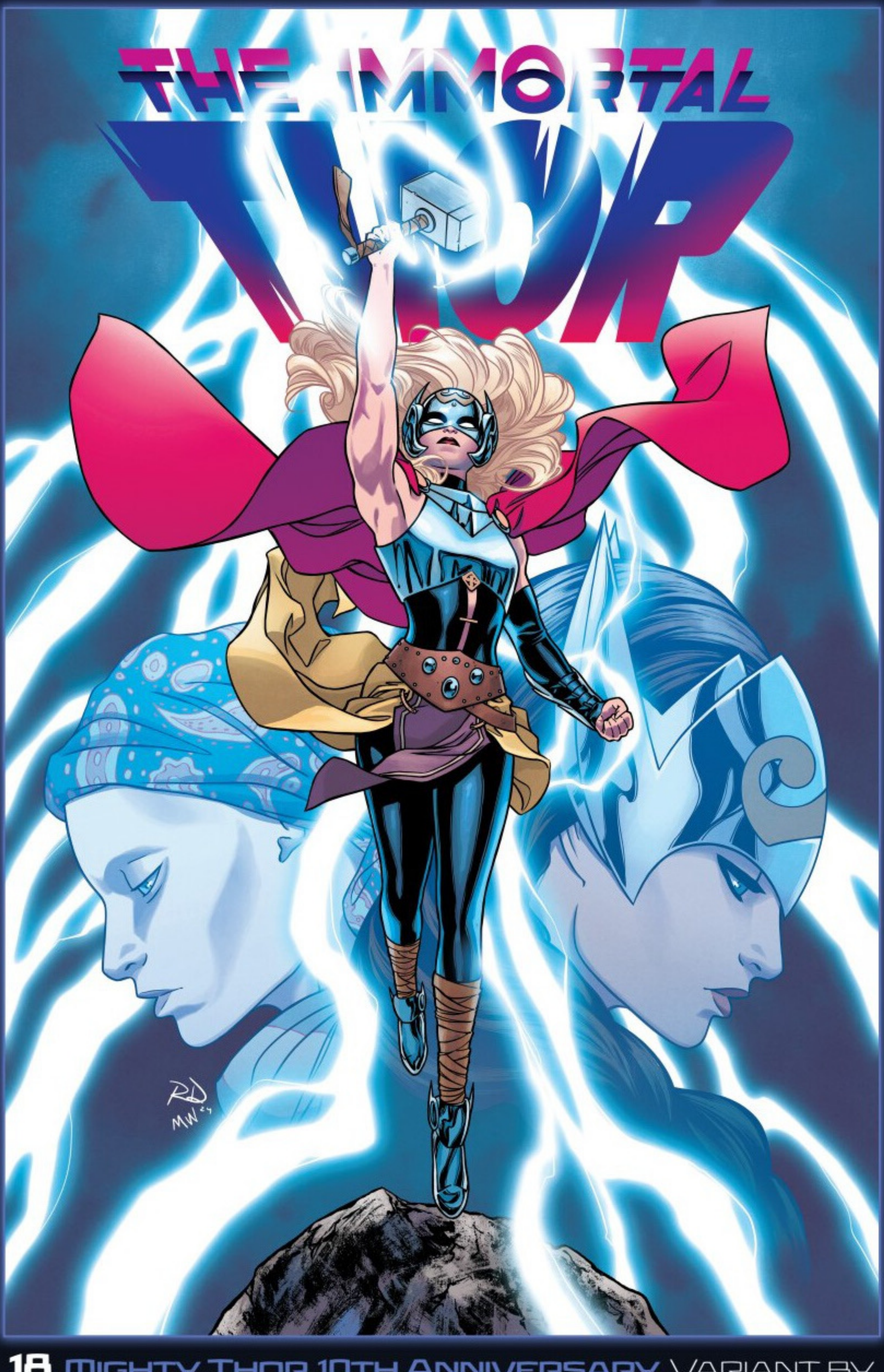
17 Variant by

Davi Go



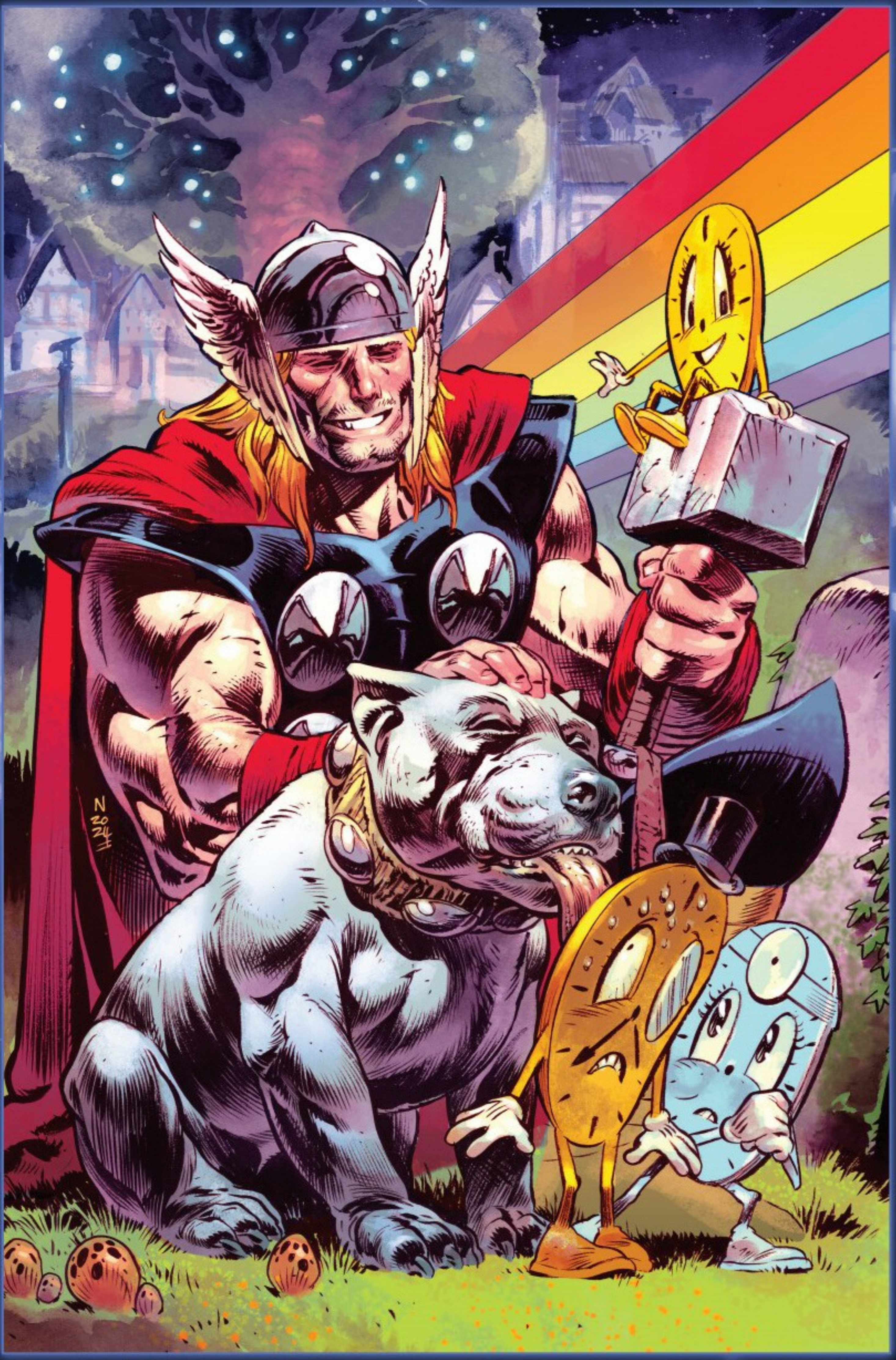
17 Variant by

Greg Land & Rachelle Rosenberg

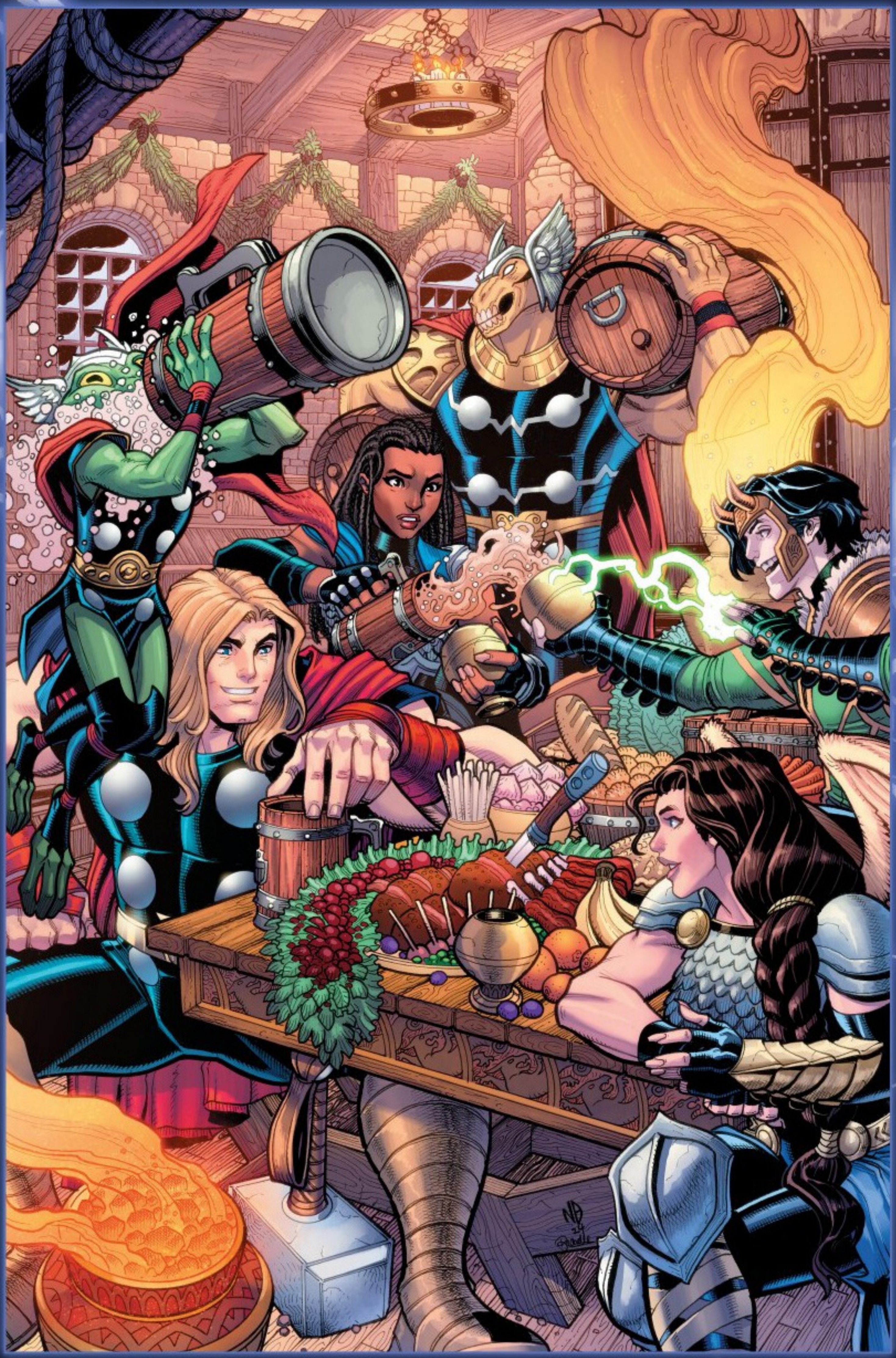

THE IMMORTAL THOR

18 Mighty Thor 10th Anniversary Variant by

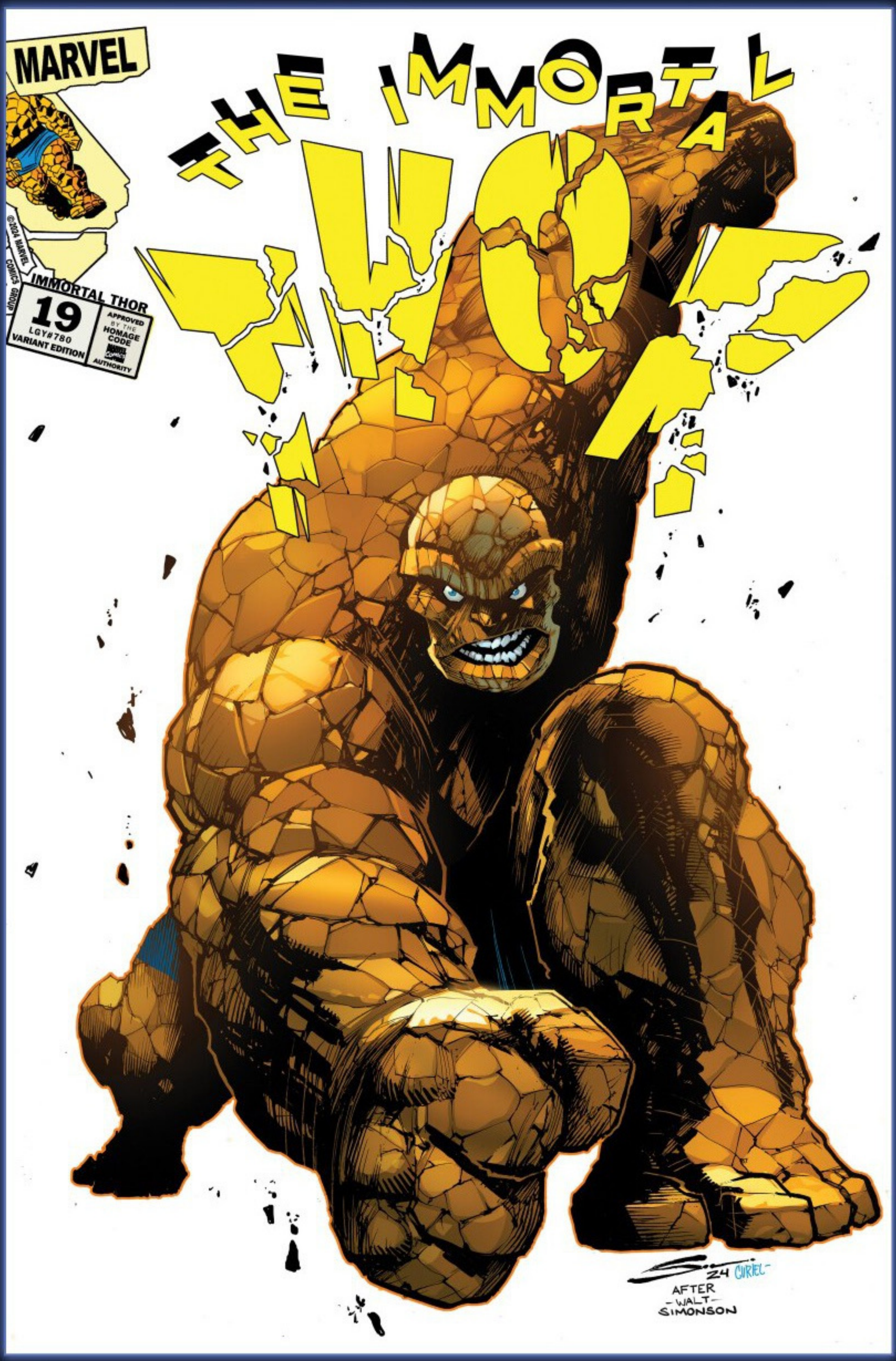
Russell Dauterman & Matthew Wilson



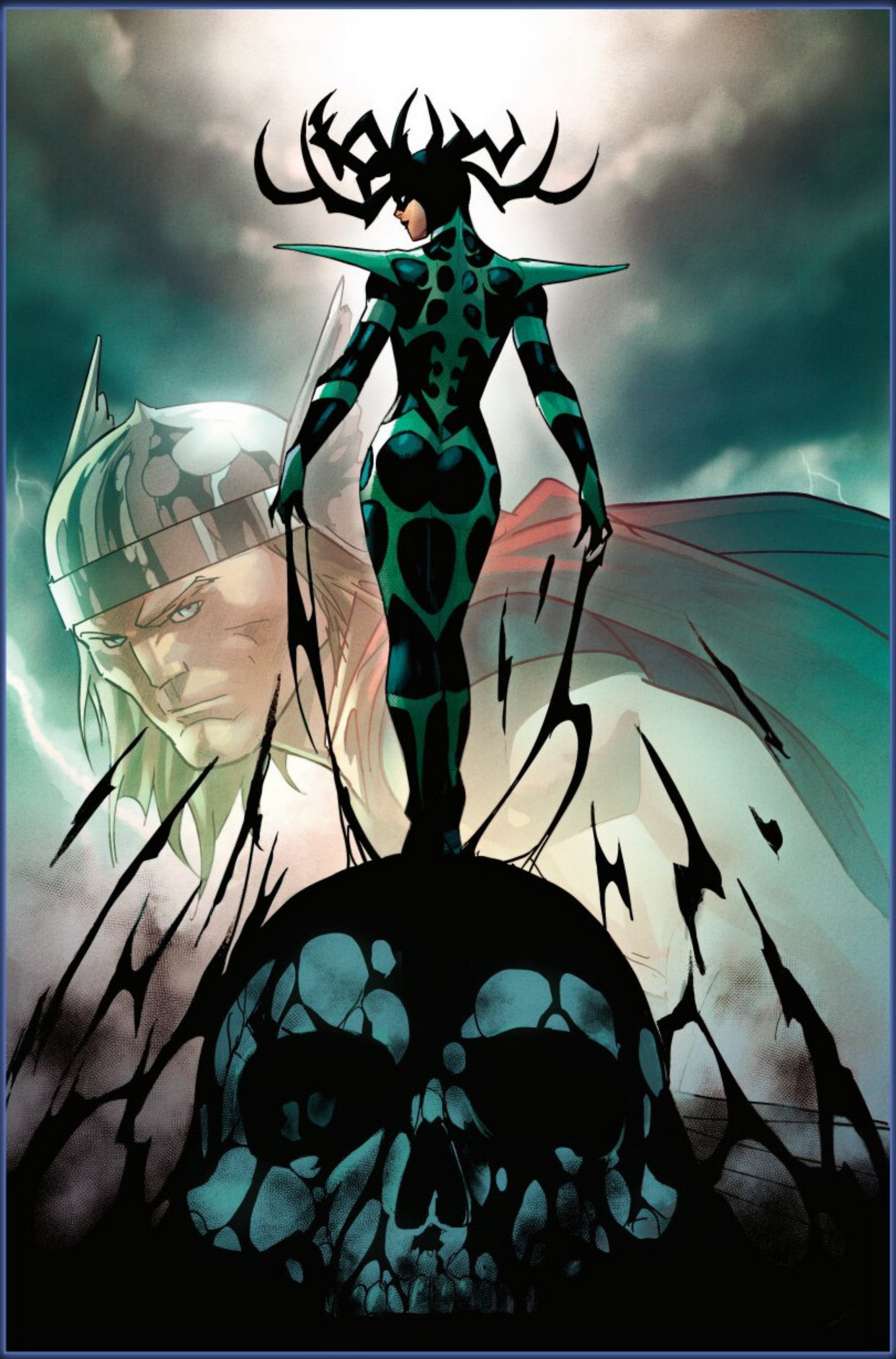
18 Stormbreakers Variant by
Nic Klein



18 Winter Holiday Variant by
Nick Bradshaw &
Rachelle Rosenberg

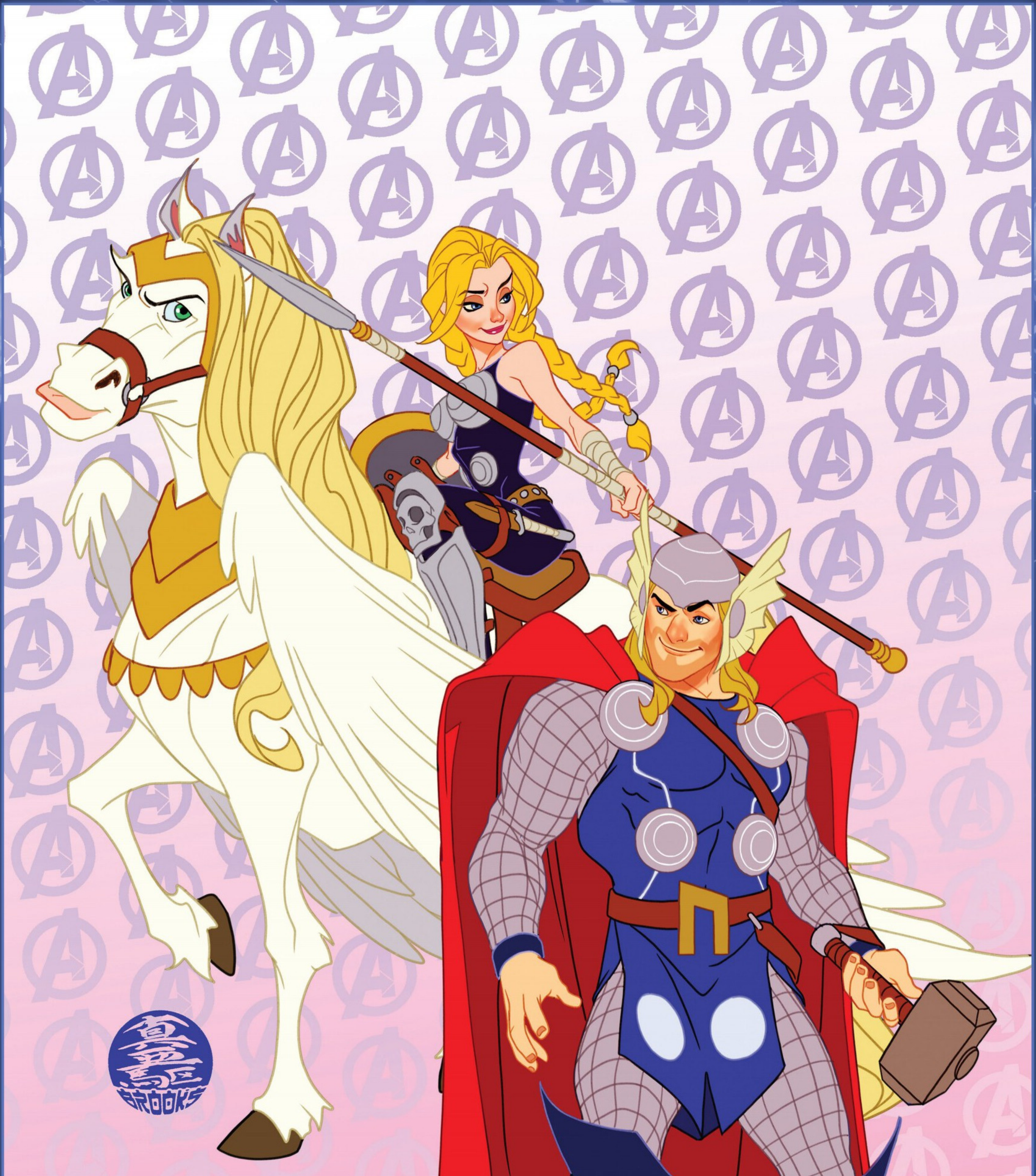

MARVEL
THE IMMORTAL THOR
IMMORTAL THOR
19
LGY#780
VARIANT EDITION
APPROVED BY THE HOMAGE CODE AUTHORITY
AFTER WALT SIMONSON

19 Fantastic Four Homage Variant by
Gerardo Sandoval &
David Curiel

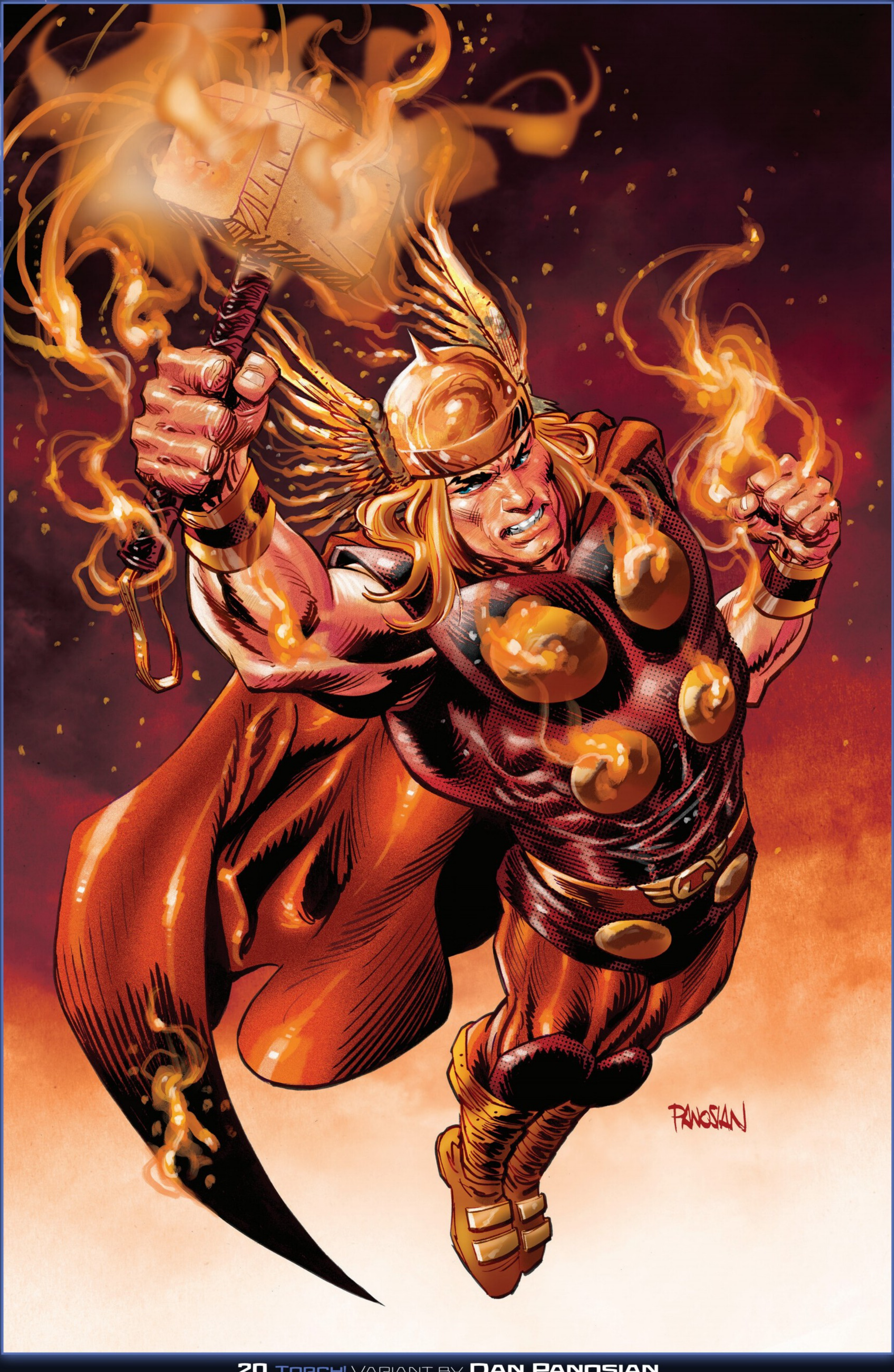


19 Variant by
Jan Bazaldua &
Espen Grundetjern

19 VARIANT BY **LUCAS WERNECK**



20 **ANIMATED-STYLE** VARIANT BY **MARK BROOKS**



20 TORCH! VARIANT BY **DAN PANOSIAN**

MARVEL COLLECTED EDITIONS

THE IMMORTAL
THOR
"Embraces everything that makes Thor great."
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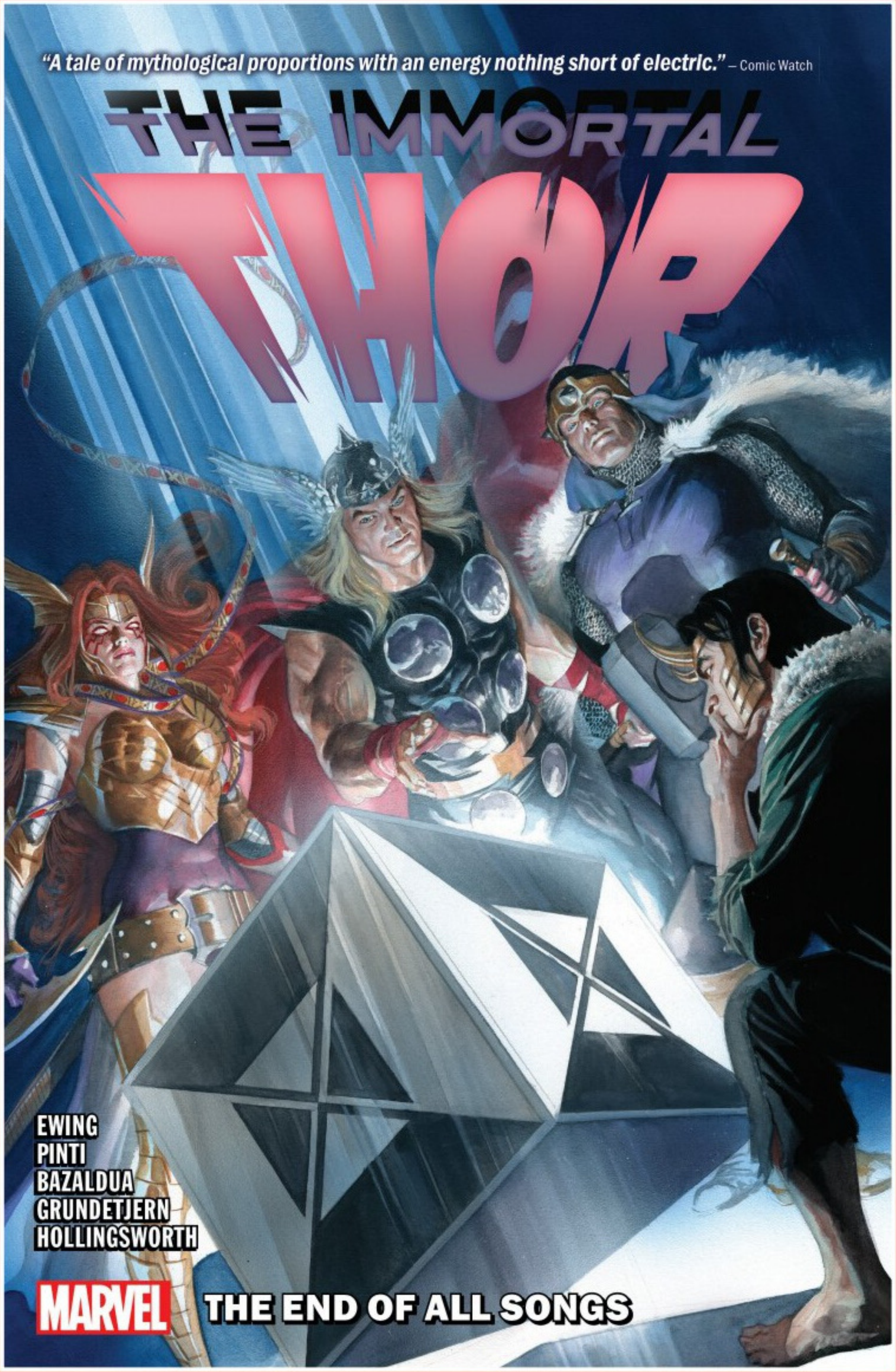
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